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The Obama Administration and Preparations for North Korean Instability

Scott Snyder & See-Won Byun

Abstract

Kim Jong-il's alleged health problems in the fall of 2008 have had mixed effects on North Korea's foreign policy and the responses of the United States and South Korea, among others, to the ongoing North Korean nuclear crisis. This paper explores in detail the implications of Kim Jong-il's health scare for U.S. policy, including specific aspects of policy implementation that may have implications for U.S. efforts to respond to possible future political instability in North Korea. Second, the paper will identify current challenges and dilemmas facing U.S. policy toward North Korea and analyze how these challenges interact with concrete policy initiatives that might be taken to prepare for possible future instability in North Korea. Finally, the paper will draw some conclusions regarding the Obama administration's preparations for and assumptions regarding prospects for instability in North Korea and how those assumptions are influencing the formation of U.S. policy toward North Korea.

Key Words: North Korea contingency planning, Obama administration, U.S.-DPRK relations, counter-proliferation, denuclearization

Kim Jong-il's failure to appear at the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on September 9, 2008 provided the basis for public speculation regarding his health, and by extension, about North Korea's leadership succession process and the future of North Korea. Kim Jong-il's health scare revived debates about the implications of possible instability in North Korea that had swirled in the mid-1990s, during the period of succession between North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-il's health problems also had apparent ramifications for U.S. policy toward North Korea at the end of the Bush administration, as North Korea took a hard stance at the end of the Bush administration against allowing verification of any of its nuclear sites in the course of implementation of the second phase of commitments under the February 13 and October 4, 2007, agreements under the Six-Party Framework. Specifically, in return for provision of 950,000 tons of heavy fuel oil (HFO) or the energy equivalent, North Korea was to provide a "complete and correct" declaration of its nuclear facilities. The United States attempted to negotiate provisions for verification inspections in response to its willingness to take North Korea's name off the terrorism list and drop North Korea from the Trading With the Enemy Act, but this process stalled out as the Obama administration prepared to come into office.

As a result, the situation inherited by the Obama administration was particularly complicated. The North Koreans had not fully completed the implementation of denuclearization commitments made during the Bush administration; nor had the other five parties completed their obligations to North Korea. Moreover, the North Korean foreign ministry spokesman declared prior to President Obama's inauguration that

denuclearization and normalization were matters that could not be linked, a direct challenge to the Six-Party Talks Joint Statement and a unilateral assertion of North Korea's nuclear weapons status as a fait accompli.¹ Following this statement, the North Koreans undertook a series of provocative actions that resulted in escalating tensions during the first half of 2009, including the launch of a multi-stage rocket using ballistic missile technology in violation of UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1718, the conduct of a second nuclear test, and a series of other shorter-range missile tests.

These hardline actions all took place amid speculation regarding Kim Jong-il's health. A dominant perception was that many of North Korea's provocative actions may have been driven by domestic political factors within North Korea, including the possibility that these provocative actions may have in part been driven by Kim Jong-il's preparation to place his third son Kim Jong-un as North Korea's next leader.² The holding of a meeting of the National People's Assembly in April of 2009 was accompanied by institutional changes including the expansion of the National Defense Commission to include Kim Jong-il's brother-in-law Jang Song-taek and leaders of other public security services, the promulgation of a new constitution, and an internal propaganda campaign to lay the groundwork for Kim Jong-un to be placed as Kim Jong-il's successor.

For the Obama administration, North Korea's unremitting series of provocations and the accompanying escalation of tensions framed the

¹-“DPRK Foreign Ministry's Spokesman Dismisses U.S. Wrong Assertion,” *KCNA*, January 17, 2009.

²- Scott Snyder, “What's Driving Pyongyang? North Korean Nukes” *Oriental Economist*, July 2009, http://www.orientaleconomist.com/documents/snyder_on_nkorea.pdf.

North Korean issue primarily as a nuclear and missile non-proliferation issue, but it also raised questions about the possibility and implications of North Korean instability. Thoughts of early engagement evaporated in light of North Korea's provocative actions, and uncertainty regarding Kim's health added to the apparent complexity of the situation. The immediate need to respond to North Korean provocations has framed the policy response of the Obama administration in terms of nonproliferation and denuclearization; i.e., the need to respond to the challenge posed by North Korea's missile and nuclear tests.

Kim Jong-il's health scare has also re-introduced the issue of contingency planning for North Korean instability as an early priority of the Obama administration that has thus far been undertaken primarily in the form of renewed military coordination efforts between the U.S. Forces Korea and Ministry of National Defense counterparts under the Lee Myung-bak administration. However, as Kim Jong-il reemerged onto the political scene, contingency planning appears to have been left behind somewhat as the political focus of policy debates has shifted back in the direction of how, when, and whether to pursue diplomatic engagement with North Korea. In the months following Bill Clinton's meeting with Kim Jong-il to secure the release of two American reporters detained in North Korea, Americans appear to be somewhat reassured that Kim Jong-il is in command, and discussions of the need for contingency planning have been replaced by speculation regarding renewed diplomatic engagement. At a security forum in Washington in September 2009, Admiral Timothy Keating, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, referred to Kim's appearance at the meeting as "great intelligence" revealing the leader as "cogent and capable of entertaining reasonable discussions,"

and acknowledged that “we were less certain of those capabilities than we now are.”³

Now that Kim Jong-il has apparently recovered, assumptions regarding his own viability can cut both ways as an influence on policy formation: on the one hand, North Korea’s tilt toward hard-line provocations during the period when Kim seemed not to be fully in control could be a catalyst for more robust U.S. engagement on the assumption that it would be easier to negotiate North Korea’s denuclearization under Kim than under a harder-line successor or in an environment where the path to succession remains contested; on the other hand, it is also possible to assume that since Kim Jong-il’s days are numbered and the likelihood that North Korea will give up nuclear weapons without regime change is low, the best U.S. option is to focus on containing North Korea’s threat while waiting for a new, more moderate leadership to emerge in the future.

This paper will explore in detail the implications of Kim Jong-il’s health scare for U.S. policy, including specific aspects of policy implementation that may have implications for U.S. efforts to respond to possible future political instability in North Korea. Second, the paper will identify current challenges and dilemmas facing U.S. policy toward North Korea and analyze how these challenges interact with concrete policy initiatives that might be taken to prepare for possible future instability in North Korea. Finally, the paper will draw some conclusions

³- Timothy Keating, “A Combatant Commander’s Perspective on Security in the Asia-Pacific,” remarks at Military Strategy Forum, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, September 15, 2009, http://csis.org/files/attachments/090915_transcript.pdf.

regarding the Obama administration's preparations for and assumptions regarding prospects for instability in North Korea and how those assumptions are influencing the formation of U.S. policy toward North Korea.

U.S. Policy Objectives and the Prospect of Instability in North Korea

U.S. short-term policy objectives are inevitably influenced by internal developments in Pyongyang, especially as it influences the realm of the possible in responding to North Korea's nuclear challenge. The prospect of instability in North Korea heightens uncertainty regarding regional and international stability. The United States has three primary objectives in its policy that could be affected by North Korean instability: to achieve denuclearization and nonproliferation both in Korea and globally; to support peaceful political and economic transition in North Korea including through U.S.-DPRK normalization and the North Korea's integration with the international community; and to maintain the U.S. commitment to regional peace and stability in East Asia.

North Korean Denuclearization and Global Nonproliferation

The primary long-term objective of U.S. North Korea policy remains "complete and verifiable denuclearization," as specified by Ambassador Bosworth during his first trip to Seoul in March 2009 as Special Envoy.⁴ In the event of sudden regime collapse in the North, the

⁴-Stephen W. Bosworth, Special Representative for North Korea Policy, Afternoon

priority U.S. interest would lie in securing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs); i.e., “loose nukes.” North Korea’s aggressive efforts to obtain a nuclear deterrent pose a direct challenge to the regional and global non-proliferation regime and to the Obama administration’s current global nuclear-arms reduction efforts. While the United States will not accept a nuclear North Korea, the Obama administration seems to face limited policy options for “breaking the pattern” of failed negotiations as Pyongyang shows no indication of giving up nuclear weapons in the near term, a challenge exacerbated by U.S. commitments in managing tensions with other troubled regimes like Iran. There is widespread pessimism in Washington that North Korea can be convinced through negotiations to give up its nuclear weapons, but the administration continues to insist that North Korea affirm its commitments to denuclearization contained in the September 2005 Joint Statement. Ahead of President Obama’s trip to Asia in November, Jeffrey Bader, the National Security Council’s Senior Director for East Asian Affairs, expressed the administration’s willingness to talk directly to North Korea “with the explicit goal of denuclearization and with recognition that its previous commitments to denuclearize and return to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, notably those in 2005, remain valid.”⁵ Another recent study by Joel Wit advocates that the U.S. approach toward a North Korea in transition should thus be based on a “gradual and phased” process of denuclearization and elimination of the

Walkthrough in Seoul, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, March 9, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2009/03/120194.htm>.

⁵-Jeffrey Bader, remarks at “Obama Goes to Asia: Understanding the President’s Trip,” The Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, November 6, 2009, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2009/1106_obama_asia/20091106_obama_asia_trip.pdf.

North Korean WMD threat in order to meet realistic progress.⁶

North Korea's Peaceful Transition and Integration with the International Community

The United States would like to see North Korea embark on a peaceful process of economic and political integration into Northeast Asia as a means of enhancing North Korea's stability and prosperity, as opposed to continued provocations and confrontations by Pyongyang as a hostile or failed state. At his summit meeting with Lee Myung-bak on November 18, President Obama clearly stated that if North Korea is willing to take steps toward denuclearization, "the United States will support economic assistance and help promote its full integration into the community of nations. That opportunity and respect will not come with threats."⁷ President Obama's statement strongly parallels Lee Myung-bak's Grand Bargain proposal. The two leaders agreed to "closely consult on how to elaborate and implement" this "definite and comprehensive resolution." Many American specialists would like to see the United States facilitate North Korea's economic reform and opening in line with international norms, accompanied by a normalization of U.S.-DPRK relations.⁸ As the nuclear issue is brought under control, U.S. progress in

⁶-Joel Wit, "U.S. Strategy toward North Korea: Rebuilding Dialogue and Engagement," U.S.-Korea Institute, SAIS and Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University, October 2009, <http://uskoreainstitute.org/pdf/specialreports/NKstrategy/NKreportOCT09jwit.pdf>.

⁷-Remarks by President Barack Obama and President Lee Myung-bak in Joint Press Conference, Seoul, November 19, 2009.

⁸-Bradley O. Babson, "Transformation and Modernization of North Korea: Implications for Future Engagement Policy," Nautilus Institute, October 2009, <http://www.nautilus.org/DPRKPolicy/Babson.pdf>.

diplomatic normalization with North Korea will strongly depend on progress in inter-Korean relations and in Pyongyang's ties with other U.S. allies in Asia. Pending progress on denuclearization, it is a core interest of the United States to promote North Korea's economic development as a means of achieving the long-term stability of North Korea and the region through a political solution that is mutually acceptable among all players.

East Asian Regional Peace and Stability

The possibility of instability in North Korea poses a clear threat to U.S. regional security interests in East Asia as continued North Korean provocations under a fragile regime risk escalation into broader regional conflict. Pyongyang's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons as a tool for national strength raises concerns over a possible arms race in Northeast Asia. In addition to the regional security and economic challenges, a crisis in the North might possibly lead to unintended conflict between the United States and China in the effort to protect respective interests on the Korean peninsula and could even have negative effects on South Korean stability.⁹

Diplomatic coordination among the United States, China, and South Korea is essential in planning for possible contingencies in North Korea; the United States and China are South Korea's primary diplomatic partners in dealing with North Korea as signatories of the 1953 Korean War Armistice. Although the United States has attempted to establish some principles for three-party coordination in response to potential instability

⁹- Scott Snyder and Joel Wit, "China Views: Breaking the Stalemate on the Korean Peninsula," USIP Special Report No. 183, February 2007.

in North Korea, seeking assurances that the Chinese military will not cross the Yalu River into the North, and guarantees that South Korea would lead coordination of humanitarian operations in the North, the possibility of trilateral discussion on this issue at any level remains a sensitive issue.¹⁰

U.S. Strategies toward Possible Instability in North Korea

Kim Jong-il's health scare, or the possible future emergence of a new leader in North Korea, is unlikely to change the main objectives of U.S. policy toward the Korean peninsula. While pursuing U.S. objectives listed above, the Obama administration has responded to the prospect of instability in North Korea in the following ways:

1. Greater attention to military aspects of contingency planning

Initial U.S.-ROK joint efforts to consider the military implications of instability in North Korea occurred in the late 1990s in the context of North Korea's famine. At that time, it became clear that North Korea's weakness and possible collapse could pose challenges as significant as those deriving from North Korea's strength. As a result, U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) and the ROK Ministry of National Defense (MND) developed OPLAN 5029-98. However, that plan was not updated and received little attention under engagement-oriented progressive Korean administrations led by Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun.

¹⁰-Jay Solomon and Jason Leow, "Beijing Spurns U.S. Effort to Prepare in Event of Korea Leader's Demise," *Wall Street Journal*, November 7, 2008.

In fact, political differences blocked the establishment of a revised operational plan under the Roh administration. Concern regarding Kim Jong-il's health and the possibility of another leadership succession has catalyzed renewed efforts by USFK and the Lee administration to develop a full plan to respond to possible North Korean contingencies.

Amid heightened tensions from Pyongyang's missile launch earlier this year, President Lee reportedly requested the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command (CFC) to finalize OPLAN 5029 by the end of April as a full-fledged joint action plan to respond to various internal instability situations in the North. USFK Commander General Walter Sharp affirmed that his command was working with South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staffs on a plan that would include specific actions to deal with North Korean refugee inflows, civil war, the detainment of South Korean hostages in North Korea, and natural disasters, as well as measures to prevent the smuggling of WMDs out of the North.¹¹ More recently under the joint operational plan, U.S. and ROK militaries have agreed that U.S. forces will take the lead in securing and eliminating WMDs in North Korea in the event of instability, even after the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) from the United States to South Korea in April 2012. General Walter Sharp has indicated that the new OPLAN 5029 includes various scenarios where "the U.S. military will take charge of WMD elimination works if needed" while both U.S. and ROK forces will engage in contingency operations "jointly or independently in accordance with emerging

¹¹-Jung Sung-ki, "S. Korea, U.S. Chart Contingency Plans on N. Korea," *The Korea Times*, April 22, 2009, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2009/09/205_43632.html.

situations.”¹²

2. Greater emphasis on counter-proliferation to contain ongoing North Korean provocations

North Korea’s missile and nuclear tests have highlighted the need to contain and retard the North’s nuclear and missile program development efforts. UNSC Resolution 1874 provides an authorization for member states to take aggressive measures to block both North Korean import and export of materials that could be used as part of North Korea’s nuclear and missile development programs. Efforts by UN member states to implement sanctions both unilaterally and multilaterally should reduce North Korean proliferation activities and deter North Korean trade in nuclear and missile-related items while pressuring Pyongyang to reengage with the international community at an early stage.

While Chinese and Russian support remain critical for the effectiveness of international sanctions, previous limitations of enforcement despite approval in the UNSC suggest that the United States must also continue to lead independent actions to sanction North Korea, especially given recent North Korean violations of UNSC Resolutions. In cooperation with its allies and the international community, the United States should more aggressively implement efforts to block North Korean nuclear and missile-related trade through implementation of both the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and UNSC Resolution 1874, which includes a strong call upon member states to strengthen enforcement to stop North Korean suspicious cargo.

¹²-Jung Sung-Ki, “U.S. To Remove N. Korean WMDs in Contingency,” Defense News.com, November 5, 2009.

On the other hand, the North Korean nuclear crisis and the international response may also compel North Korea to pursue closer economic ties with China and trading partners who remain isolated from the international system as suggested by recent North Korean efforts to restructure its external economic relations in an effort to minimize the impact of traditional sanctions.¹³ Unilateral and multilateral sanctions alone may prove insufficient to pressure the North to abandon its nuclear weapons in the short run given the regime's continued top priority of developing its military capacity and nuclear deterrent. However, more aggressive U.S. and international efforts to implement financial sanctions on North Korea as seen in the past may still serve to boost limited leverage over North Korea.

3. Renewed diplomacy with a harder edge

Continued U.S. efforts to reengage North Korea with the international community through both bilateral and multilateral dialogue remain important both for strengthening diplomatic coordination in anticipation of new negotiations and for laying the groundwork for more effective coordination of positions during a pre-contingency phase.¹⁴ Joint efforts among dialogue partners in preparing for contingencies in the North will be essential as a means by which to manage potential regional tensions by

¹³-Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "Sanctioning North Korea: The Political Economy of Denuclearization and Proliferation," Working Paper 09-4, Peterson Institute for International Economics, July 2009, <http://www.iie.com/publications/wp/wp09-4.pdf>.

¹⁴-See-Won Byun, "North Korea Contingency Planning and U.S.-ROK Cooperation," Center for U.S.-Korea Policy, September 2009, <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/DPRKContingencyCUSKP0908.pdf>.

building trust and minimizing misperceptions.

4. *Coordination with U.S. allies*

As outlined by Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, the U.S. strategy toward East Asia remains firmly based on its bilateral alliance network in the region in addition to strengthened engagement with regional multilateral organizations and increased cooperation with China.¹⁵ U.S. strategies toward managing potential instability in North Korea will require strengthened alliance coordination on contingency planning. Washington must first continue to reassure South Korea and Japan, its key Asian allies most directly affected by a potential crisis in North Korea, of its conventional and nuclear defense commitments in the region especially in light of renewed concerns over the implications of China's rise. The Obama administration's recent declaratory statements indicating the continued viability of the U.S. extended deterrent, unwillingness to accept a nuclear North Korea, and support of renewed dialogue on North Korea, have importantly served this effort to reinforce U.S. security assurances to Asian allies. The Joint Vision signed between Presidents Obama and Lee on June 16, 2009 was significant for including a statement that "The continuing commitment of extended deterrence, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella, reinforces this assurance."¹⁶ Such efforts are also important for preventing new efforts by South Korea or

¹⁵-James B. Steinberg, "Engaging Asia 2009: Strategies for Success," remarks at the National Bureau of Asian Research Conference, Washington, DC, April 1, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/d/2009/121564.htm>.

¹⁶-*Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea*, Washington, DC, June 16, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Joint-vision-for-the-alliance-of-the-United-States-of-America-and-the-Republic-of-Korea/.

Japan to pursue their own nuclear capabilities as advocated by Conservative camps in both countries while in turn easing Chinese concerns over a potential nuclear arms race in the region.

5. Coordination with China

Policy coordination with China at the earliest stage of contingency is a critical challenge since China is the external party that has the potentially greatest direct impact on the Korean peninsula. The experience of the Korean War makes clear the possibility that the United States and China might have conflicting strategic interests in the event of instability on the peninsula, underscoring the importance of efforts to understand in advance respective strategic concerns and priorities. In the event of a power vacuum in North Korea, China, the United States and South Korea will be watching each other very closely for signs of undue intervention on the part of the other side. At the same time, the United States may feel a compelling interest in securing North Korea's WMD during a time of crisis, but China could read any such intervention as an early signal that the United States is pursuing strategic aims in the North that China might feel are unacceptable.

Given the continued challenge of engaging Beijing in any meaningful dialogue on managing instability in North Korea, it would be desirable for the United States in cooperation with South Korea to pursue quiet discussions with China focusing on practical issues of intervention, such as humanitarian operations, based on mutual understandings of respective interests and capabilities.¹⁷ Premier Wen Jiabao's recent visit

¹⁷ - Michael Finnegan, "What Now? The Case for U.S.-ROK-PRC Coordination on North Korea," PacNet No. 48, Pacific Forum CSIS, September 11, 2008.

to Pyongyang as part of efforts to launch a broad agenda for North Korea's economic development has highlighted the need to coordinate such efforts with the U.S. approach toward North Korea, even to the extent of jointly analyzing how and whether Wen's efforts were fully in accord with the spirit of UNSC Resolution 1874.

U.S. and South Korean experts remain divided over the likelihood and desired extent of Chinese intervention in securing North Korea's WMDs in particular. While Chinese military intervention in the event of instability in the North could be triggered only by certain factors such as North Korean request, the loss of control over refugees, and U.S. or South Korean unilateral intervention, China as well as Russia as nuclear powers under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) may also have strong interests in securing and eliminating WMDs in North Korea, especially given their physical proximity to North Korean nuclear sites. U.S. military intervention in cooperation with South Korea outside a UN framework in response to North Korean collapse would heighten Chinese concerns over potential threats to its national security interests especially if viewed as an initial move toward a longer-term agenda for reunification.

Obama Administration Challenges and Dilemmas in Policy toward North Korea

The Obama administration has taken some steps to address the prospect of North Korean instability as addressed above, but there is a fundamental set of questions that has not been adequately addressed: what is the Obama administration's strategic vision regarding the end state of the Korean peninsula? On a practical basis, under what conditions

will it weigh in decisively in favor of Korea reunification, and what are the limits of U.S. willingness to pursue such a policy?

The June 2009 Joint Vision Statement contained a strong endorsement of the idea that the United States and South Korea are on the same page in pursuing “a peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy.”¹⁸ This is a fine rhetorical statement of principles in theory, but its implementation may face concrete obstacles in practice. There are two factors that limit the ability of the two countries to achieve clarity in implementing the Joint Vision Statement (or ultimately to provide effective assurance to South Korean allies). First, it is impossible to determine in advance the exact scenario and international circumstances under which such a development might be possible. As a result, it is hard to say with certainty whether there might be opposition for instance, from China, that might make aspirations for Korean reunification impossible or achievable but at a higher cost than the United States is willing to bear. Who would have the upper hand in assuring the prospect of Korean reunification as a matter of political reality on the ground? China’s proximity to the Korean peninsula may provide it with leverage to shape reality on the Korean peninsula regardless of American or South Korean aspirations.

Second, the United States and South Korea have not yet been able to achieve a prior understanding regarding how to pursue a coordinated political response to instability scenarios in North Korea that would provide context for making the decisions that would guide the imple-

¹⁸-*Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea*, Washington, DC, June 16, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Joint-vision-for-the-alliance-of-the-United-States-of-America-and-the-Republic-of-Korea/.

mentation of a coordinated military plan. South Korea may have a Ministry of Unification, but there is no such counterpart within the U.S. government, and it is hard to find a unit within the U.S. government that might be effectively tasked to coordinate on such an issue.

Ultimately, the political context for any such decisions will be set by the White House and the Blue House, but the U.S. National Security Council does not have a long-term policy planning capacity (or appetite) to engage in such discussions. One might imagine that the National Intelligence Council or the Policy Planning Office at the Department of State would have the analytical capacity to consider parameters for U.S. policy on these issues, but it is not clear that the work of either of these offices would prove decisive or binding on political decisions made at the White House in the heat of a crisis. Moreover, if circumstances were to develop under which Korean reunification was in the realm of possibility, the German experience suggests that a political decision will be made by the South Korean president based on his own judgment of circumstances at that moment, and is unlikely to be guided by policy papers or long-term studies prepared by his government. For these reasons, a coordinated political understanding would be difficult to achieve in advance in part because there is no capacity within the U.S. government that would be dedicated to providing long-term planning or coordination to inform in advance such political decisions and in part because the outcome of such a political decision is impossible to predict without having better knowledge of the context in which the specific political decisions are being made.

As the Obama administration prepares to reengage diplomatically with North Korea, there is a second-order set of challenges and decisions

that the administration must make that will be influenced at least in part by its views regarding the viability of both Kim Jong-il and of the North Korean system. The remainder of this section will explore this issue in three dimensions: a) how to weigh the relative benefits and weight of bilateral versus multilateral engagement, b) the relative emphasis of administration policy on nonproliferation versus denuclearization, and c) the extent to which the administration attempts to promote sanctions/containment versus incentives/engagement as tools of its policy toward North Korea.

a) Bilateral versus Multilateral Engagement

The Obama administration has decided to pursue bilateral talks “in the context of the six-party process,”¹⁹ but the relative weight that one places on bilateral talks and the expectations that one might reasonably hold for bilateral engagement are influenced in part by perceptions that the North Korean government is a viable and coherent counterpart. This perception certainly influenced the first Bush administration, which arguably wished for regime change in North Korea and as a result was hesitant to pursue diplomatic engagement with North Korea on the basis of the idea that such engagement would ‘legitimize’ North Korea as a negotiating partner. The situation in the early months of the Obama administration has been the opposite, although it is arguable that North Korea’s leadership sees bilateral engagement with the United States at least in part as a means by which to enhance its own legitimacy and stature

¹⁹-Stephen Kaufman, “United States Willing to Meet Bilaterally with North Korea,” *America.gov*, September 11, 2009, <http://www.america.gov/st/eap-english/2009/September/20090911164037esnamfuak9.756106e-02.html>.

in the international community. Likewise, U.S. reluctance to engage positively has been interpreted by the North Koreans as evidence of what it calls the U.S. “hostile policy.”

North Korea appears to have concluded that multilateral engagement is hostile to North Korean interests, especially in the context of the use of international pressure in the form of the UNSC resolutions condemning North Korea’s missile and nuclear tests. In this sense, multilateralism has become the vehicle for a type of pressure against North Korea that the North Korean leadership may perceive as threatening to its core interests, and therefore designed to bring about change in North Korea. To a certain extent, this is a correct perception. The North Korean counterstrategy appears to be to enhance bilateral engagement, especially since separate bilateral deals with neighbors, especially those involving resource transfers, serve as material support that can help shore up the economic if not the political viability of the regime.

Perceptions of regime viability may have an influence on the relative weight that the Obama administration ultimately places on bilateral versus multilateral approaches to dealing with North Korea. If Kim Jong-il is perceived as facing a serious time deadline due to health concerns, the Obama administration may want to reach out bilaterally in order to test the possibility of coming to an understanding regarding North Korean denuclearization in hopes that it would also be binding on his predecessors, presuming that Kim Jong-il comes to the conclusion that he needs to strike a deal before it is too late. Or, the Obama administration may decide to minimize direct engagement and emphasize multilateral talks if it reaches the conclusion that Kim Jong-il will not deal and that his time horizon for making and implementing agreements is too

short. Of course, this will not be the only assumption underlying the direction of the Obama administration's policy, but it is arguable that assumptions regarding the question of leadership succession and its influence on prospects for denuclearization will have a bearing on the implementation of the Obama administration's policy going forward.

b) Denuclearization versus Nonproliferation

Asian analysts seem obsessed with the question of whether or not the Obama administration is committed to denuclearization. This perception is influenced in part by the time horizon and level of urgency that the administration seems to assign to the objective of denuclearization, which is in turn influenced by the administration's assessment of both the likelihood of successful negotiations and the viability of North Korea as a negotiating counterpart in the longer term.

The longer the time horizon for pursuing denuclearization, the higher the likelihood that such a time frame is supported by assumptions that the North Korean leadership is viable and unwilling to give up its nuclear weapons, or that the chances of convincing North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons under Kim Jong-il or any successor leadership are low. If such a time frame is pushed too far out (for instance, beyond the policy time horizon of the administration in question), it may be possible to infer that the administration has decided that denuclearization is too hard to achieve in a reasonable time frame, that the only viable approach is containment, and that the United States faces the realistic necessity of living with a nuclear North Korea for the foreseeable future, even if it maintains a rhetorical policy in opposition to North Korea's *de facto* nuclear weapons status. In this case, diplomacy (either through bilateral

or multilateral talks) becomes a tool for crisis management and a means by which to constrain but not necessarily to reverse North Korea's nuclear program. Containment may be useful as a component of counterproliferation, but political realities suggest that even with a robust containment option, there is a limited likelihood that U.S. policy efforts can do more than slow (versus capping or reversing) North Korea's continued nuclear development.

Active efforts to pursue denuclearization on a shorter time horizon, both through negotiations and through the promotion of increased political pressure and regional cohesion, suggest the assumption that North Korea's denuclearization is possible through a combination of active diplomacy and regional cohesion designed to step up the pressure to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table. Such an approach may or may not assume that North Korea is likely to collapse, but it also doesn't fear the possibility that a North Korean collapse or temporary heightened tensions or even conflict may be necessary in order to achieve the objective of denuclearization. At a minimum, the pursuit of such a policy requires a willingness to envision the possibility that under certain circumstances North Korea will in fact change its nuclear weapons policy in response to the right combination of pressure and diplomatic negotiations. Such an approach may assume either that the counterpart remains viable or that there is a possibility that the current leadership may be replaced by a leader with whom it is possible to reach and implement a deal on the basis of diplomatic negotiations.

c) Containment versus Engagement

The question of which tools to use in dealing with North Korea clearly is influenced by each country's assessment of the viability of the North Korean regime and the particular policy objective that each country is pursuing based on an assessment of North Korea's regime viability. For instance, Chinese leaders have made clear their preference for incentives and engagement as a primary approach in their policy toward Pyongyang as part of an effort to provide assurance and tangible financial support for the North Korean regime. This approach appears to be motivated in part by perceptions that North Korea requires external support in order to remain viable and that provision of such support can be useful to the promotion of North Korean regime stability. In the case of the United States, implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1874 is designed to push North Korea back to the path of denuclearization, but since the Chinese regard sanctions as narrowly targeted they are not considered as a useful instrument.

While there is no evidence to date that the Obama administration has used sanctions or incentives as a means by which to influence regime stability, there appears to be some conflict between Chinese efforts, which despite unprecedented cooperation in forging a sternly-worded resolution seem to be strongly influenced in implementation of the resolution by concerns about regime stability, and the U.S. objective of bringing North Korea back to the path of denuclearization (not simply back to denuclearization talks). Moving forward, it is possible to imagine that differences between the United States and China over containment versus engagement could be influenced at least in part by differing perceptions of the extent to which external policies might influence factors for internal

stability in North Korea as well as differences over how much instability to risk in the course of pursuing North Korea's denuclearization. To the extent that Chinese policymakers perceive a significant risk of instability in North Korea — either derived from internal sources or the perception that external pressure may result in destabilization — China may take actions that will act as an effective constraint on the ability of the United States to pursue denuclearization based on China's own concerns about prospects for instability.

Conclusion

Kim Jong-il's health crisis has had some effects on the Obama administration's early efforts to formulate a policy toward North Korea, but this paper argues that most of these effects have been secondary to the focus on North Korea's nuclear program as a destabilizing influence on regional security and a source of potential proliferation to other regions. Primarily, Kim's health crisis has been a reminder that he will not live forever. There is a possibility both that leadership succession is not assured and that there will be a resulting discontinuity in North Korea's current policies, which have hardened in ways that appear to significantly reduce the near-term prospects for North Korea's denuclearization. The initial focus on Kim Jong-il's health issues, while perceived as an underlying reason for North Korea's provocations, was obscured by the need to mount a political response to North Korea's nuclear and missile tests at the United Nations.

Despite Kim Jong-il's personal health issues, a dominant framework for U.S. policy making has been the effort to deny North Korea the

possibility of repeating past tactics in dealing with the issue of denuclearization, suggesting that the Obama administration is more worried by continuity in North Korea's diplomatic approach and continued challenge to U.S. denuclearization objectives than by problems that might be created by North Korean instability or a failed leadership succession.

In fact, U.S. concerns about prospects for North Korean instability were eased in part by the fact that the North Koreans themselves appeared to be paying greater attention to the political succession process in the spring of 2009, even if their internal focus was interpreted to mean that the North might be less responsive to international concerns. In addition, the harder, provocative line taken by the North when Kim's health appeared to be uncertain has provided an indirect reminder to the United States that there may be a greater possibility that regime transition will result in a harder-line from the North than that a new North Korean leader will embrace reform. There have even been suggestions that nuclear capability might be manipulated as an internal political factor that reinforces the power and control of Kim and any successor he may choose to designate. (Or, the realization on the part of Kim Jong-il that time is not on his side might provide new opportunities for the United States, although the conventional wisdom is that Kim and/or his designated successors are highly unlikely to give up their nuclear weapons.)

Kim Jong-il's health crisis has had an impact on the urgency with which the Obama administration has pursued contingency planning and has revitalized coordination between U.S. Forces Korea and the incoming Lee Myung-bak administration, which in contrast to the Roh administration has shown a renewed willingness to take up official planning with the United States for the possibility of North Korean instability. Strengthened

U.S.-ROK coordination of policy toward North Korea is a prerequisite for effective contingency planning and is now in place, although there are still questions about whether the United States and South Korea would be in the same place politically in the event of an actual contingency in the North. For this reason, there should be an enhanced effort to promote inter-agency and inter-governmental pre-coordination to the extent possible on a variety of contingency scenarios that the United States and South Korea might face together.²⁰

Another focal point for enhanced planning in response to possible North Korean instability has involved the need to enhance policy discussions and policy coordination on this issue with China. However, the PRC continues to refuse to take up this issue at an official level, instead preferring an informal exchange of views on possible approaches that the respective sides might take in response to North Korean instability. While Chinese interlocutors appear to be increasingly confident about their capacity to manage the humanitarian overflow of North Korean refugees into Chinese territory, they still show great concern about the prospects for and intentions of a U.S.-ROK joint intervention, insisting that approval by the UNSC would be necessary prior to any external intervention into the North. On many tactical issues, Chinese concerns with the potential for instability in North Korea are becoming a source of conflict with approaches preferred by the United States precisely because the Chinese side continues to value North Korean stability as a priority over the objective of denuclearization. This suggests that the near-term

²⁰- See-Won Byun, "North Korea Contingency Planning and U.S.-ROK Cooperation," Center for U.S.-Korea Policy, September 2009, <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/DPRKContingencyCUSKP0908.pdf>.

prospects for achieving North Korea's denuclearization are low, and that the Chinese are committed to promoting regime continuity, even at the expense of allowing North Korea to continue as a *de facto* nuclear weapons state.

The United States and South Korea should lay out an approach to North Korea's denuclearization that is not centered on a single scenario or dependent on a single individual; rather it is necessary for the United States and South Korea to indicate clearly that denuclearization goes hand-in-hand with the prospect of a normalized political and economic relationship with the United States.

In the long-term context of North Korea's economic and political transition, current U.S. efforts in bilateral and multilateral dialogue, denuclearization and nonproliferation, and containment and engagement can be viewed as mutually reinforcing rather than reflecting conflicting intentions. The United States along with its Asian allies and key regional powers must pursue an approach that combines bolder measures against North Korean provocative behavior with continued dialogue and engagement in support of North Korea's positive transformation and integration with the international community. These efforts should ultimately be coordinated with a common vision for the future of Korea, stemming from which regional stakeholders can respond to various North Korean contingency scenarios through comprehensive and multi-dimensional approaches.

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Russia's Korea Policy in the 21st Century

Alexander Lukin

Abstract

This paper studies Russia's policy toward the two Koreas and its approach to the Korean WMD crisis, and on this basis makes a prognosis on Moscow's future approach to the peninsula. It begins with an analysis of the evolution of Moscow's relationships with Pyongyang and Seoul respectively, studies the approaches of various groups in Russia toward the prospect of Korea's reunification, describes the Russian approach to the Korean WMD crisis and Moscow's possible role in its resolution, and then makes some conclusions about the possible future trends in Moscow's Korea policy.

Key Words: Russia, South Korea, North Korea, WMD, Korea's unification

Korea has traditionally been an important field of Russia's international strategy. This was the case both before and during the Soviet period. A relative loss of interest in the Far East and Asia in general in the first half of the 1990s, due to the one-sided Western orientation of the Kremlin at the time, gradually gave way to a more balanced approach. This change naturally influenced Moscow's Korea policy. On May 15, 2000, speaking at a ceremony for the presentation of diplomatic credentials, President Vladimir Putin stated: "Historically and geopolitically the Korean peninsula has always been within the sphere of Russia's national interests."¹ As then-Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov wrote in his book: "Russian policy toward the Korean peninsula is based on the need to maintain good neighborly relations and partnerships with both Korean states."² These statements manifested the new policy aimed at promoting more active ties with both Seoul and Pyongyang and developing Russia's role in stimulating inter-Korean dialogue.

Russia officially and unofficially has two fundamental interests concerning the Korean peninsula, which have been stated repeatedly by Russian government representatives. First, Russia does not want weapons of mass destruction anywhere in the world, least of all near its border. Second, Russia does not want a war in Korea. There are several reasons for this. The first is the general Russian understanding of the current international situation, particularly Washington's disturbing desire to establish international rules while ignoring international law and inter-

¹-Vladimir Putin, "Speech at a Ceremony for Presenting Credentials," May 15, 2000, http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2000/05/15/0000_type82914_126893.shtml.

²-Igor Ivanov, *Novaya rossiyskaya diplomatiya. Desyat' let vneshney politiki strany* [The New Russian Diplomacy: Ten Years of the Country's Foreign Policy] (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2001), p. 158.

national organizations – primarily the United Nations and its Security Council. The second reason is more practical: if there is a war near the Russian border it will be a terrible disaster, and nobody knows what might happen. Russians do not want a nuclear cloud or thousands of hungry refugees entering their territory, and neither do other neighboring countries. Third, both North Korea and South Korea are Russia's economic partners; Russia has economic projects in both countries. Generally, Russia wants a friendly and cooperative situation on its borders which would provide suitable conditions for the growth of Russia's own economy.

This paper studies Russia's policy toward the two Koreas and its approach to the Korean WMD crisis, and on this basis makes a prognosis on Moscow's future approach to the peninsula. It begins with an analysis of the evolution of Moscow's relationships with Pyongyang and Seoul respectively, studies the approaches of various groups in Russia toward the prospect of Korea's reunification, describes the Russian approach to the Korean WMD crisis and Moscow's possible role in its resolution, and then makes some conclusions about the possible future trends in Moscow's Korea policy.

Russia and the DPRK

Russia's neighbor, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), is not an ordinary country. Its peculiarity is not due to its hereditary dictatorship or the extreme poverty of its population neither is an exception in the contemporary world. What makes the North Korean regime unique, even in comparison to the most exotic countries, is that it

combines all the repressive features of Soviet-style communism with a harsh form of Oriental despotism.

The current situation in North Korea can be characterized in the following way. Under current conditions, there are no signs that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has a chance to pull itself out of its deep economic crisis, which is acquiring an increasingly systemic character. The ruling regime is not capable of moving toward reforming the country's economy. It fears losing control of the situation, and with it, losing power. Attempts to carry out so-called government measures confirm these fears. The North Korean authorities are attempting to strengthen the administrative-command system of managing the economy, keeping the same "proven" methods of management. The DPRK political elite have so far conserved a single solidifying element, which is the clan of Kim Jong-il. The absolute poverty of the population, their lack of rights, their strong ideological indoctrination, and the repressiveness of the leaders create an atmosphere of hopelessness - and disbelief in the possibility of change for the better - that so far has permitted the regime to maintain political stability by controlling the political mood in society. However, the situation in the country continues to worsen and one cannot rule out its possible destabilization. The army and security agencies have significantly expanded their ability to influence North Korean society. The process of militarization has engulfed almost all spheres of peoples' lives. Leaders make maximum use of increasing international pressure on North Korea in connection with its nuclear missile activity to strengthen the standing of the army, which remains the guarantor of the continued life of the present political regime. The role and significance of the party in the DPRK has changed noticeably. The

Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) has in effect turned into a propagandist element of the military leadership. The task of the party today is to carry out intensive expository educational work in society and to propagandize the "Songun" policy (a priority of the army) as the only true political course capable of putting the country on the road to "prosperity and happiness."

The political elite of the DPRK are concerned today about the problem of regime succession, and of ensuring stability and predictability in this process. With this goal in mind, several career appointments have recently been made to the government Defense Committee. At the same time, despite the deepening North Korean crisis, the spontaneous, ungovernable collapse of the regime in the near future is unlikely. This is due to many factors, but the most important is the Chinese. China, which is strongly involved in and concerned about North Korean issues, currently does, and will continue to do, all that it can so that processes in North Korea are under control and Chinese interests in the DPRK and in the entire Korean peninsula are met. It is clear that the sudden collapse of the DPRK and unification into a single Korea - for which the United States has exerted strong pressure - is not in line with the interests of China.³

Some Russians may doubt whether Russia - a country that is trying to join the contemporary developed world - should do business with this historic anachronism at all. Under former President Boris Yeltsin, especially at the beginning of his term, the Moscow leadership answered "no" to this question. There were both ideological and economic reasons

³ - Here the author bases his statements on work by the leading Russian expert in Korean Studies, Valery Denisov.

for this answer. When Andrey Kozyrev was appointed foreign minister in the early 1990s, he tried to make the new Russian foreign policy the opposite of that of the Communist Soviet Union. As he announced in August 1991, democratic Russia, the U.S. and other Western democracies were natural friends and allies in the same way as they had been natural enemies of the totalitarian Soviet Union.⁴ Naturally, following this course, the Soviet Union's former friend, Pyongyang, and its former foe, Seoul, would also exchange places. Besides, Russia was experiencing serious economic difficulties. As a result, Moscow suspended economic aid to Pyongyang. This contributed to a severe economic crisis in North Korea that led to mass hunger and the deaths of tens or possibly hundreds of thousands of people. At that time, Moscow expected that the North Korean regime, like the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, would soon fall, and concentrated all its efforts on developing relations with Seoul, which it viewed as a much more valuable economic partner.

However, after Vladimir Putin came to power, the new Russian leadership concluded that it was necessary to normalize relations with Pyongyang. The shift took place in 2000. On February 9, Moscow and Pyongyang signed a full-scale Treaty on Friendship, Good-Neighborly Relations and Cooperation that, according to Igor Ivanov, "underlined the decade of cool relations between the two countries."⁵ In July of the same year, during one of his first trips abroad as Russian President, Putin paid a state visit to Pyongyang. This was the first visit of a top Moscow leader to the capital of the DPRK in the entire history of that country. A joint

⁴-Andrey Kozyrev, *Preobrazhenie* [The Transformation] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1995), p. 211.

⁵- Ivanov, *Novaya rossiyskaya diplomatiya*, p. 158.

declaration consolidating the new level of that relationship was signed. In August 2001, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il paid a bizarre, almost one-month-long visit by train to Russia.

Improving relations with Pyongyang became a manifestation of the general evolution of Moscow's foreign policy to a less one-sided and more pragmatic and realistic course. As a result, as noted in the 2007 Russian Foreign Ministry review, "the potential to retain good neighborly relations with the DPRK was retained overall, although Russia's consistent position against missile and nuclear tests and support of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1695 and 1718 caused a pained reaction in Pyongyang."⁶ Indeed, Russia and the DPRK have built up strong potential for the expansion of bilateral relations. This potential has been present throughout the history of Soviet-Korean relations, as when both countries were allies developing multilateral cooperation (Of course, there were problems in both the political and economic spheres). This led to the current state of bilateral relations. Moscow and Pyongyang significantly updated the legal framework of their interstate relations. The Treaty of 2000 replaced the 1961 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. It marked the beginning of a new stage in relations between Russia and the DPRK, based on the principles of international law, and lacking its former ideological base.

Over the past 10 years, more than 40 intergovernmental and inter-departmental agreements have been signed between the two parties. The

⁶- "Vneshnepoliticheskaya i diplomaticheskaya deyatel'nost' Rossiyskoy Federatsii v 2007 godu. Obzor MID Rossii" [Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Activity of the Russian Federation in 2007: A Survey by the Russian Foreign Ministry] (Moscow: Russian Foreign Ministry, March 2008), http://www.un.int/russia/new/MainRootrus/docs/off_news/180308/newru2.htm.

signing of the Pyongyang and Moscow Declarations at the summit meetings of 2000-2002 was important for the future development of Russian-North Korean relations. The new agreement, set forth in the policy declaration agreements, states that there is a solid legal basis for deepening Russian-North Korean cooperation. Russia has consistently adhered to the mutual agreements and provisions recorded in these documents, and has built its relations with North Korea based upon them.

Moscow has purposefully and actively worked, and continues to operate, within the framework of a political settlement of the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. Russia condemned North Korea's nuclear ambitions, and it has taken a principled position at the UN on issues such as the missile launches carried out in North Korea in July 2006 and the test of a nuclear device in October of that same year. Russia played the leading role in the development of two UN Security Council resolutions, 1695 and 1718 (missile and nuclear), which reflected not only the serious concern of the world community regarding the actions of Pyongyang but also appealed to North Korea to halt the implementation of its nuclear missile program. These resolutions also contained concrete steps to curb the military capabilities of North Korea, showing a path toward a political solution to the complex problems of the Korean peninsula.

An unresolved problem in bilateral relations remains North Korea's debt to Russia of \$9 billion. Pyongyang insists on a full debt cancellation under the pretext that this debt was formed as a result of North Korea fulfilling the task of "defending the Far Eastern outpost of world socialism." It is understood that in the midst of the current financial and economic crisis, Russia is not prepared to demand the money from Pyongyang. But

further development of economic trade or investment cooperation with the DPRK is not possible without the signing of an appropriate agreement on the restructuring of the North Korean debt.

For many years, the volume of bilateral trade has not grown. Trade turnover between Russia and the DPRK in recent years has been in the range of \$100-150 million. As a result of a permanent economic crisis and numerous natural disasters, North Korea is not able to supply the needed quantities of such traditional products such as magnesite clinker bricks, ferrous and nonferrous metals, cement, etc. In turn, the country cannot import the oil and petroleum products, manganese and chrome ore, and other inputs needed for its economy. Factors that hamper trade turnover capacity also include failure to meet the requirements of North Korea's trading partners - the chronic shortage of goods, delays in payments for goods received, or complete lack of payment.

Some opportunities for economic cooperation with North Korea do exist. Pyongyang has expressed its wish to revive production at the thirty-eight industrial facilities which had been built with Soviet assistance. To do this, it will need Russian specialists and equipment. North Korean leaders have expressed interest in a project to rebuild the Trans-Korean Railway and connect it with the Trans-Siberian line (the original line was largely disassembled during the severe crisis in North Korea). Finally, the Pyongyang regime needs spare parts for the Russian-produced weapons with which its army is equipped, and it would also like to acquire new Russian weapons. All these projects are interesting, but they should be approached with caution and realism. First, it is important for Russia that North Korea is able to pay in cash and not simply apply for another loan on which it can easily default later. Second, it is hardly reasonable

to fuel tensions on the peninsula and to heighten the perception of threat against South Korea. In principle, Russian business is ready to work in the North Korean market, but only after the settlement of the DPRK's debt and on the condition that North Korean business structures comply with civilized forms and methods of cooperation.

Russia provides humanitarian aid to the North Korean population, which experiences constant food shortages. Most of this assistance is delivered through the UN World Food Program (WFP). This assistance is provided every year. What's more, in 2008, Russia decided to provide emergency food aid to the North Korean population, giving the DPRK population approximately three thousand tons of wheat flour. In 2008, through the UN World Food Program, Russia also contributed \$5 million for the purchase of food and supplies for North Koreans.

The Russian Federation is interested in having a good, reliable and predictable neighbor in the DPRK, and in developing multifaceted relations built on the principles of modern international law, non-interference in internal affairs, mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit. However, these relations should not be characterized by attempts to beat or to deceive the partner, or to achieve goals that are inconsistent with universally recognized international norms, as is often characteristic of Pyongyang's policies.

Russia and South Korea

Political relations between Moscow and Seoul have been developing steadily since the late 1980s, when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev first made decisive steps toward normalization. Over the subsequent

decades of Russian-South Korean relations, a system of government-level consultations has been established and nine summits have been held. Speaking to the MBC and KBS TV channels on February 26, 2001, President Putin commented: "I believe we do not have any disputed issues between our two countries. The level of political relations is very high. In the international arena we often hold practically the same positions."⁷

The visit by South Korean President Kim Dae-jung to Russia in May 1999 played a significant role in strengthening ties between the two countries. It resulted in several important documents. During an official visit by President Putin to South Korea in February 2001, a joint Russian-Korean statement was issued and intergovernmental agreements on the protection of classified military information and on tourism were signed.

After President Roh Moo-hyun came to power, Russian-Korean contacts intensified. In October 2003, President Putin and his Korean counterpart met during the APEC summit in Bangkok. During the same year, Federation Council Chairman Sergei Mironov and Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov visited South Korea and the fifth meeting of the Russia-Korea Joint Committee of Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation was held. For the first time in its many years of cooperation, South Korea received Russian military equipment and weapons, a significant portion of which went toward the payment of the debt the Russian Federation owed to the Republic of Korea, totaling \$600 million. The economic,

7- Interv'yū prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii V.V.Putina yuzhnikoreyskim telekanalam "Em-Bi-Si" i "Key-Bi-Es" [Interview with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir V. Putin by the South Korean TV Channels of MBC and KBS], February 26, 2001, http://www.mid.ru/dip_vest.nsf/99b2ddc4f717c733c32567370042ee43/cc617ec37ecb5ed2c3256a3a003f5735?OpenDocument.

trade, and investment cooperation between Russia and the Korean Republic has grown markedly in recent years. Trade turnover has grown from \$2.7 billion in 2000 to \$15 billion in 2007. In 2008 mutual trade reached \$20 billion. However, Russia's exports to the Republic of Korea are dominated by raw materials, whereas its imports are dominated by finished products. Changes to the structure of Russian supplies to South Korea occur very slowly, and this causes dissatisfaction on the Russian side.

Investment cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea has been gaining momentum in recent years. South Korean investments total approximately \$3 billion dollars (growing by more than \$700 million in 2008). Although Russian investment in the Republic of Korea's economy is relatively small (approximately \$30 million dollars), after the construction of the Hyundai car factory in South Korea with the participation of Russian capital, that investment will grow to almost \$700 million dollars. The momentum to expand trade and economic cooperation between our two countries has provided a solution to the problem of Russia's debt to the Republic of Korea. As a result of negotiations, an agreement was signed in 2003 on the restructuring of Russia's debt and its payment by 2023.

In 2008 a South Korean astronaut performed a successful flight into space as part of a Russian crew. Deliveries of liquefied natural gas from Russia to the Republic of Korea have begun (1.5 million tons annually). Gazprom and the Korean National Gas Corporation (KOGAS) are discussing the construction of a liquid gas plant, as well as a gas-chemical complex. The parties reached agreements in principle to construct a pipeline from Siberia to the countries of Northeast Asia. The Korean state-owned gas

corporation has taken upon itself the preparation of a technical-economic study of this project. Rosneft and the Korean National Oil Corporation signed a memorandum which provides for joint participation in the Sakhalin-3 project, the development of the West Kamchatka shelf of the Okhotsk Sea. Work to find oil in this region has already begun. The drilling of the first wells showed that this is a very promising project. Oil reserves are estimated at 3.7 billion barrels.

Cooperation in the area of auto manufacturing is intensively developing. According to South Korean experts, Russia is one of the most promising international markets for automobiles. South Korean automobile concerns annually supply more than 200,000 automobiles to the Russian Federation (including those built on Russian territory). Near St. Petersburg, construction has begun on an automobile plant worth \$400 million. By 2010, the plant will produce 100,000 cars annually.⁸

It is highly unlikely that any future problems will develop in the political relations between Moscow and Seoul. There are no issues of dispute between them and both are interested in seeing cooperation in the region and the international arena as a whole. Economic cooperation between the two countries has also grown significantly, and has good prospects for the future. South Korea has the potential to become the largest investor in Russia among the countries of the region. Russian civilian industry does not lag as far behind Korean industry as it does behind that of Japan, a country with which Moscow also has a territorial dispute. At the same time, the large Korean corporations which constitute

⁸- Valeriy Denisov, "Rossiya na Koreyskom poluostrove: Problem i perspektivy" [Russia on the Korean Peninsula: Problems and Prospects], Institute of International Studies, MGIMO, Analytical Papers No. 545, June 2009, pp. 9-10.

the basis of Korean industry are likely to have more courage to invest in Russia than smaller ones from China or Taiwan. There exists a real opportunity for a meeting of Korean investment capital with advanced Russian science and technology in various areas of production.

The Russian View of Korea's Unification

Moscow's Korea policy is influenced by the Russian political elite's varying points of view on the two Korean states. Various political forces in Russia view Seoul and Pyongyang differently. The more pro-Western politicians and specialists, who are called rightists in Russia, usually maintain that relations with South Korea - with its market economy and successful democratization - are much more important than relations with the totalitarian communist North. They support tougher sanctions against the North and more support for the U.S. and Japanese positions within the six-party talks. They argue that Russia should stimulate the collapse of the "communist dictatorship," or at least should not prevent it from happening, because creating a united Korea with a market economy would be in Russia's interests - both economically and geopolitically. A united Korea would be instrumental in developing the Russian Far East and would provide a solid counterweight to communist China. Supporters of a more traditional Soviet-style policy sympathize with Pyongyang because they consider the DPRK as an ally in the ongoing struggle against U.S. world domination. Supporters of both points of view can be found both within and outside the government (although those in the government do not openly express the most radical opinions).

However, the above groups currently do not exert decisive influence

on practical foreign policy. At present, Moscow's foreign policy is formulated and implemented by the group close to President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. They promote the pragmatic approach toward the two Koreas described above which treads a middle path between the two more radical views.

It is quite clear that the North Korean regime is historically doomed, and there might be only a few in the Kremlin who doubt it. It might take five, ten or fifteen years, but it will eventually disappear from the world political map and a new, united Korea will emerge as Russia's neighbor. It will be a major country, comparable to Britain or France by its population and economic strength. South Korea, a country much more populous and developed than the DPRK, will surely be its core. Therefore, it would not be reasonable for Russia to pursue a strategy of long-term relations with Pyongyang.

However, the timing and method by which reunification occurs is important both for Koreans and their neighbors. No one wants the North Korean regime - with its large stockpile of advanced weapons - to collapse abruptly, prompting its hungry population to seek refuge in neighboring countries. This scenario is the greatest nightmare of leaders in Seoul who know very well that even the much more developed Germany is experiencing serious difficulties incorporating its Eastern half (which was much more developed and prosperous than North Korea is now). Seoul would much prefer to see a reformist leadership come to power in the North and prepare its population to accept more modern ways of living by pursuing gradual economic and political reforms. And in this field Seoul's interests coincide with those of Moscow and Beijing, which are also interested in North Korea, not as a source of chaos and

various threats, but as an effective economic partner.

From this point of view, Moscow's traditional ties with Pyongyang are an important asset: the latter has top-level contacts with a very limited number of countries. It is in Russia's interest to demonstrate, in cooperation with China and South Korea, to the North Korean regime the advantages of the market economy, and to encourage reformist tendencies within it, hinting that by introducing market reforms the Korean Communists would be able to last longer, or perhaps even become an integral part of the new political system as a leftist or regional party - as was done by former Communists in Albania, Germany and some other East European countries. In the initial stage, the examples of China and Vietnam - where the ruling Communists managed to stay in power and improve the living standards of the population by introducing economic reforms - will be even more persuasive.

The history of communist states shows that changes should evolve naturally from within the system. Such changes are usually the result of the growing influence exerted by forces and individuals possessing a strong knowledge of the outside world, a clear understanding of their own society's shortcomings, and the ability to view that society within a historical perspective. Such forces are stimulated by international cooperation which brings in foreign investment, international companies with modern management practices, access to world news and information, the need to learn foreign languages, foreign travel, etc. Russia is interested in such cooperation with North Korea for both economic and political reasons, as it needs to use every opportunity to promote trade, stability and cooperation in the Far East in order to create more opportunities for the development of its own

troubled Far Eastern regions.

The Russian Approach to the Korean WMD Crisis

Russian (Soviet) policy regarding nuclear non-proliferation on the Korean peninsula has always been clear, consistent and principled. Russia has advocated, and continues to advocate, a non-nuclear Korean peninsula and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the region. Russian cooperation with the DPRK in the nuclear energy field during the first nuclear crisis of 1993-1994 was based solely on the international legal standards enshrined in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The experimental nuclear reactor, built in the DPRK with Soviet scientific and technical assistance in the early 1960s, was under IAEA supervision. The Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna trained North Korean experts exclusively in the peaceful use of nuclear power. In providing technical assistance for the construction of a nuclear plant on the territory of the DPRK, the obligatory condition set by the Soviet Union was that Pyongyang must sign the NPT. Only after Pyongyang became a signatory to the NPT did the Soviet Union sign the agreement on the construction of North Korean nuclear power plants. The Soviet side responded positively and supported the North Korean proposition for the formation of a nuclear-free zone on the Korean peninsula, as expressed in official statements by the government and the DPRK Foreign Ministry in June 1986, June 1987 and November 1989. Moscow reacted positively to the Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, signed by the heads of the DPRK and the Republic of Korea in December 1991.

At the time of the first nuclear crisis in 1993-1994, when the DPRK announced its withdrawal from the NPT, Russia ceased providing assistance to North Korea for construction of its nuclear power plant, provoking an angry reaction from Pyongyang. As a depositary of the NPT, Russia took part in all international actions aimed at persuading North Korea to return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to continue cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Moscow welcomed the DPRK-U.S. agreement in Geneva in October 1994. Although this was a bilateral agreement, the important ideas contained in the Geneva Framework Agreement were put forth in Russia's initiative on March 24, 1994, which called for the convening of a multilateral forum for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, to guarantee the security of both Koreas.⁹

Pyongyang's announcement of its wish to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty came as a surprise for Moscow. The official statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry issued on January 10, 2003 expressed deep concern. It maintained: "It is undoubted that such a move can only exacerbate the already tense situation around the Korean peninsula and inflict substantial harm upon the universal international legal instruments of ensuring global and regional security." Moscow expressed hope that Pyongyang "will listen to the unanimous opinion of the world community and of its neighbors and partners and make a choice in favor of the observance of the international obligations assumed in the area of non-proliferation and of an equal and mutually beneficial dialogue with all the concerned parties on the pressing issues of national

⁹-Denisov, "Rossiya na Koreyskom poluostrove" [Russia on the Korean Peninsula], pp. 12-13.

security.”¹⁰

The Russian approach to the crisis over North Korean weapons of mass destruction should be viewed against the general backdrop of Moscow's understanding of the situation on the Korean peninsula and of the non-proliferation issue in general. The proliferation of nuclear weapons is extremely dangerous for the world at large. Even so, it conflicts with Russia's national interests more so than the interests of other major powers. Russia is the only country in the world with the capacity to make a retaliatory nuclear strike against the United States. In this respect, Russia is one of the two most powerful countries in the world. The proliferation of nuclear weapons devalues Russia's military strength and, consequently, Russia's overall influence in the world. For Washington, however, the spread of nuclear weapons is not so critical because this is only one of several areas where the U.S. is first in the world. For Russia, this is the only factor that puts it on a par with the U.S. and higher than other countries. Nuclear proliferation, especially near Russia's borders, is not only dangerous for Russia, but it also undermines Russia's influence in the world.

The North Korean announcement of its withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, its refusal to cooperate with the IAEA, the restarting of its nuclear program and its admission that it possesses nuclear weapons all caused serious concerns and led to condemnation from Moscow. Russia is very serious in cooperating with other countries on the non-proliferation program. Moscow has repeatedly stated that

¹⁰- Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation regarding the DPRK's intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, <http://www.in.mid.ru/Bi.nsf/arh/02B24D38CA8450B843256CAA004745EC?OpenDocument>.

North Korea should renounce all programs for both nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. However, Russia also believes that Washington should take its share of responsibility for the failure of the 1994 deal with Pyongyang and reach a compromise with North Korea in order to avoid hostilities. Moscow shares these principles with Beijing. A joint Russian-Chinese declaration signed during a visit by Chinese leader Hu Jintao to Moscow in late May 2003 reiterates: "The parties state that preservation of peace and stability on the Korean peninsula meets the security interests of the two countries and also the common aspirations of the international community. The scenarios of power pressure or the use of force to resolve the problems existing there are unacceptable. The parties advocate the creation of a nuclear-free status for the Korean peninsula and observance there of the regime of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Simultaneously, the security of the DPRK must be guaranteed and favorable conditions must be established for its socio-economic development."¹¹

Russia has a strong interest in determining specifically how to proceed with settling the problem of weapons of mass destruction in Korea and resolving the situation there in general. It would be a positive step if the United States and North Korea were to come to some type of bilateral settlement. If three-party talks are needed, such as those that were held in Beijing in April 2003, that would be acceptable. If Russia were to be included, that would also be acceptable. It is the result that is most important.

¹¹- "Joint Declaration of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China," the Kremlin, Moscow, May 27, 2003, <http://www.in.mid.ru/Bl.nsf/arh/6A3C0C886E26414043256D34002FCEBF?OpenDocument>.

Russia plays an important role in the six-party talks (consisting of Russia, the United States, China, Japan, the DPRK, and the Republic of Korea), which began in connection with the 2003 nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula, due to its constructive efforts to find a political means to solve the problem. In fact, Russia's initiatives, which provided a "packaged solution" to the crisis, formed the basis of agreements that were reached at the six-party talks. This, together with the joint statement of "the six" on September 19, 2005 and the initial Action Plan of February 13, 2007 to implement the joint statement, led to an agreement within the six-party talks on October 3, 2007. The difficult path toward implementing all of these documents began in mid-2008 with the question of Pyongyang giving information to the participating countries of the Beijing talks about its nuclear designs and facilities. The United States began the process of taking North Korea off the list of state sponsors of terrorism and removing restrictions on trade with the DPRK under the law on trade with enemy states. Moscow's constructive service contributed to the ability of "the six" to reach a compromise when Russia's direct participation succeeded in overcoming another deadlock in the negotiations. This concerned the release of North Korean accounts in Banco Delta Asia (Macau) and the transfer of \$25 million via Russian banks to the DPRK. This allowed the six-party talks to resume, which ultimately led to progress in resolving the Korean nuclear crisis.

In accordance with the Beijing agreements, Russia was to deliver 100,000 tons of fuel oil to North Korea by the end of 2008 (the first batch of 100,000 tons has been delivered). Russia supplied a total of 200,000 tons of energy to North Korea in 2008 with a value of \$200 million. These deliveries were carried out as compensation for the disabling of North

Korea's nuclear facilities. As stressed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Russia has fully fulfilled its obligations in this matter. In the words of the Russian President, North Korea needs a system of "positive incentives."¹²

Of course, there are different ways to solve these or other crisis situations. Preference is given, of course, to diplomatic and political means and negotiations. The appearance at the Russian borders of another nuclear state, albeit with a small nuclear capability, is totally unacceptable for Moscow. Therefore, Russia was alarmed that the development and implementation of the DPRK's nuclear weapons program took not one or two years, but a significant period of time, during which the Soviet Union and the DPRK were still military and political allies, and Russia provided North Korea with assistance in implementing a peaceful nuclear program and participated in the construction of a nuclear power plant on DPRK territory. North Korea assured Moscow that its nuclear intentions were entirely peaceful. It was only after the Soviet Union declared that it was going to normalize relations with South Korea that Pyongyang suggested that, in such a case, it would need to create a "powerful weapon" in order to protect its statehood.¹³ At that time, Moscow either did not take this threat seriously or considered it to be another North Korean bluff. In any event, on October 9, 2006, North Korea conducted a nuclear weapon test. Even earlier, in February 2005, it declared itself a nuclear state.

¹²-Dmitry Medvedev, "Interv'yu predstavityam sredstv massovoy informatsii stran 'Gruppy vos'mi'" [Interview with the Representatives of the Media of the G8 Countries], July 3, 2008.

¹³-As quoted in Denisov, "Rossiya na Koreyskom poluostrove," p. 14.

It should be kept in mind that in both the six-party talks as well as in signed agreements, the North Korean side actually has not fully rejected its positions of principle. According to the former Russian Deputy Foreign Minister A.P. Losyukov, “The North Koreans are not planning to reject anything 100 percent. It is not possible to get them to reveal all of their programs or to receive a report on every gram of plutonium made.”¹⁴ That assessment is unquestionably accurate. The main goal of the DPRK nuclear program is to develop its scientific and technical potential. Losyukov is also correct in stating that “the mystery shrouding the North Korean nuclear program is itself a weapon of sorts for Pyongyang that it skillfully uses during the Beijing talks.”¹⁵ According to some specialists, the decision by North Korea to destroy its nuclear facilities in Yongbyon was connected with the production of resources for those plants and the need to liquidate them. Pyongyang considers it entirely logical to have others foot the bill to accomplish that task. In fact, it has managed to do just that, both in the past and in the present. As an example, the United States paid \$2.5 million for the destruction of the cooling tower at the nuclear plant in Yongbyon.

In the second half of 2008, Pyongyang achieved its desired result when it once again halted the process of bringing its nuclear facilities offline and threatened to restart the Yongbyon plant if the United States did not remove the DPRK from its list of states that sponsor terrorism. The U.S. State Department officially announced that henceforth North

¹⁴ - “Koreytsy umelo i mudro shantazhiruyut svoikh partnerov” [Koreans Skillfully and Wisely Blackmail Their Partners], *Vremya novostey*, May 14, 2008, <http://www.vremya.ru/2008/82/5/203804.html>.

¹⁵ - *Ibid.*

Korea is not a state sponsor of terrorism. However, the U.S. did not rule out the possibility of “returning North Korea to the terrorist list” if Pyongyang did not fulfill its obligation to permit verification of its nuclear programs.

In renewing good neighborly relations at the end of the 20th century and signing a number of political and legal documents, the Russian Federation and North Korea expressed the firm intention “to make positive efforts for disarmament and global stability and security against all the policies of aggression and war. The DPRK and Russia express the willingness to get in touch with each other without delay if the danger of aggression to the DPRK or to Russia is created or when there is the need to have consultations and cooperate with each other under the circumstances where peace and security are threatened.”¹⁶ That is one of the key provisions of the Pyongyang declaration that North Korea effectively ignored when it embarked on the course of escalating the nuclear missile crisis - a move that led to the United Nations Security Council passing two severely anti-North Korean resolutions (1695 and 1718). Despite the fact that everyone was able to reach a new compromise agreement within the framework of the six-party talks and start liquidating the DPRK’s functioning plutonium facilities a short time later, questions remain regarding North Korea’s willingness to fulfill the obligations it has assumed in mutually approved documents. First of all, it is necessary to solve the problem of verification of North Korean nuclear facilities. That requires first renewing official relations between the DPRK and the International

¹⁶- Joint Russian-Korean Declaration, July 20, 2000, http://www.fortunecity.com/meltingpot/champion/65/joint_decl.htm.

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and carrying out inspections of nuclear facilities based on existing rules and guidelines.¹⁷

The nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula is not isolated to the DPRK. South Korea has also made attempts to acquire a nuclear potential of its own. In the 1970s, the government of President Park Chung-hee was on the verge of creating a nuclear bomb, and only a sharp reaction from the United States was able to temper Seoul's ambitions. All the same, it is disquieting that South Korea did not abandon its efforts to develop a "non-peaceful use" of nuclear power. It is known that South Korea ran a secret uranium enrichment program in 1982 and again in 2000, and Seoul was compelled to "admit" as much and inform the IAEA. Although this fact did not prompt an anti-South Korean demarche by the international community, it did serve as a sign that the IAEA would have to pay close attention to Seoul's activities in the nuclear field.

As an interested party and as a depositary to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Russia is likely to continue actively working for an overall diplomatic solution to the Korean nuclear crisis, and will work to transform the Korean peninsula into a zone free from weapons of mass destruction.

¹⁷-Denisov, "Rossiya na Koreyskom poluostrove," pp. 14-15.

Conclusion: The Outlook for Russian Policy toward the Korean Peninsula

Achieving an economic revival will remain the primary goal for Russia for many years into the future. It was largely this goal that prompted the shift toward close cooperation with the West, since the current Russian leadership considers the support of the leading industrial powers to be instrumental to Russia's economic development. However, the same goal also motivates the ongoing diplomatic task of maintaining stability on the borders and developing mutually beneficial cooperation with Russia's neighbors. For the current leadership in Moscow, it is clear that the DPRK will remain one of Russia's neighbors for the foreseeable future, and this reality should be used as much as possible to Russia's benefit - that is, for economic cooperation and for increasing Russia's role in both the region and the international community as a whole. To achieve this goal, the Kremlin continues to revive its traditional ties with Pyongyang, and uses them to increase security and stability on the peninsula and to stimulate the inter-Korean dialogue. This course is supported by the bulk of Russia's centrist political elite, and it will continue to be pursued for the foreseeable future.

The new Russian activism on the Korean peninsula manifested itself in Moscow's approach to the inter-Korean dialogue. Its position has come a long way since the time of traditional Soviet-era communism, when it unconditionally supported Pyongyang's military adventures. The new Moscow-Pyongyang treaty signed in 2000 (unlike the 1961 version) does not contain any military or security obligations. President Putin stressed on several occasions that Russia "has assisted the peaceful settlement of

the Korea problem and will do so in the future”¹⁸ and that his country “is ready to use the potential of its relations with both South and North Korea” to assist in such a settlement.¹⁹ At the same time, speaking at the Republic of Korea National Assembly on February 28, 2001, the Russian leader articulated five principles of Russia’s approach: 1) the peace process and cooperation between the North and the South should be based on principles agreed upon by the Korean people themselves, with no external interference; 2) all problems should be resolved exclusively through peaceful, diplomatic means in the spirit of the South-North Korea Declaration of June 15, 2000; 3) Russia would welcome the process of creating a peaceful, united Korean state that would be friendly toward Russia and other countries; 4) Russia will support the non-nuclear status of the Korean peninsula; and 5) Russia will cooperate with countries that are interested in implementing projects aimed at economic development of the region and creating a solid basis for stability in the Far East, in which the countries of Northeast Asia would participate.²⁰

This position is understandable. Russia can only be optimistic about the tendencies toward normalization on the Korean peninsula and the prospect of the country’s reunification. The result of normalization will be the stabilization of the military and political situation on the

¹⁸ - Press-konferentsiya po itogam rossiysko-koreyskikh peregovorov [Press Conference Summing Up Russian-Korean Negotiations], February 27, 2001, http://www.mid.ru/dip_vest.nsf/99b2ddc4f717c733c32567370042ee43/2633f6d888988866c3256a3a003f5738?OpenDocument.

¹⁹ - Vladimir Putin, “Vystuplenie v Natsional’ nom sobranii Respubliki Koreya” [Speech at the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea], February 28, 2001, <http://www.mid.ru/Ns-dvbr.nsf/58954e9b2d194fed432569ea00360f06/432569d80022638743256a060045e60e?OpenDocument>.

²⁰ - *Ibid.*

peninsula, and this is in line with Russia's interests. There is still another reason why the emergence of a united Korean state would be beneficial for Russia. Politically and economically, that state would certainly more closely resemble the current South Korean model than the system in the DPRK. This means that Russia will have a larger and more active economic partner and investor. Russia, especially its neighboring Far Eastern regions, would definitely benefit from such a partner.

The emergence of a stronger, united Korea would also meet Russia's geopolitical interests. The further development of Russia's relations with Japan is limited by an ongoing territorial dispute. Many in Russia are concerned with the potential security threat that a rapidly developing China might represent. With Korea, Russia does not have any of these problems. Moreover, in Russia's view, Korea can provide a useful counterbalance to the Japanese and Chinese influences in the region. Russia would likely play a similar geopolitical role for Korea, especially in view of the complicated history of both Korean-Japanese and Korean-Chinese relations. Further, a larger, united Korea, freed of a permanent military threat, would logically pursue a more self-confident foreign policy, reducing the role of the U.S. on the peninsula. At the same time, due to the leading role the United States occupies in the modern world and the fact that Korea's neighbors are much stronger and more populous than even the two Korean states combined, Korea will be motivated to develop cooperation with Washington.

Considering the above-mentioned points, future Russian policy will continue striving to develop equal relations with both Korean states based on the principles of international law, without allowing a tilt in favor of either side. Without artificially dampening or accelerating relations

with either of the two Koreas, Russia will proceed strictly on a mutually advantageous basis. In reality, however, because of the economic situation in the North and the unpredictability of the North Korean regime, that will mean accelerating cooperation with Seoul. Moscow will take a constructive approach to settling the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula with the prospect of creating a zone in the region that is free of weapons of mass destruction and the means for their delivery. Moreover, after completing delivery of 200 tons of fuel oil, Russia is unlikely to continue participating in compensating North Korea's further steps toward the denuclearization of the peninsula, and in subsequent negotiations will emphasize the need for Pyongyang to fulfill its obligations from pertinent international and legal documents such as the United Nations Charter, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, UN Security Council Resolutions 1695 and 1718, and others. It will promote efforts toward a military détente on the Korean peninsula, the moving of military forces of both sides away from the line of contact in the demilitarized zone, and the subsequent reduction of those forces under strict international control. At the same time, Russia will develop mutually profitable trade and economic ties with North Korea and take steps to restructure that country's debt. However, Russia will not write off that debt because it might at some point be possible for Pyongyang to repay it in some form – for example, within the context of a joint economic project involving Russia, South Korea and North Korea. Also, Russia will endeavor to improve the mechanism for the inflow of South Korean investment into the Russian economy, take steps to introduce Russian businesses into the high-technology sector of the South Korean economy, and step up work on three-party (North Korea, South Korea and Russia) cooperation on

railway transportation, connecting the Trans-Korean and Trans-Siberian Railways, among other things.

The new atmosphere of cooperation that emerged in Russian-U.S. relations following U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Moscow in September 2009 and Washington's decision to cancel plans to deploy elements of its missile defense system in Eastern Europe will clearly contribute to developing a stricter position by participants in the six-party negotiations regarding North Korea's nuclear ambitions. That type of approach has already taken shape with regard to the nuclear problem in Iran, and has already produced certain fruits in the form of the greater flexibility shown by Iran. Beijing apparently understands that, as seen by the increasing pressure it has placed on Pyongyang, first sending special representative and member of the State Council of China Dai Bingguo to North Korea in autumn 2009, followed by a visit from Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. During Wen Jiabao's visit, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il agreed to return to discussions of the nuclear problem in a multilateral format on the condition that his country may enter into bilateral talks with the United States.

Those announcements were met with mixed reactions in Moscow. On one hand, Moscow favors a renewal of the six-party talks. On the other hand, Moscow is clearly dissatisfied with North Korea's understanding of a "multilateral format" in which Pyongyang reaches an agreement with Washington, while all the other participants pay for it to reject nuclear weapons, without presenting terms or demands of their own. That dissatisfaction was clearly expressed by the official representative of Russia's Foreign Ministry, Andrey Nesterenko, in a briefing on October 8, 2009. Nesterenko said that Russia looks positively at discussing the

nuclear subject in any format “given the understanding that such talks are not a substitute for six-party negotiations, but to the contrary are conducive to creating the conditions for their renewal.”²¹

As the country with the greatest influence over Pyongyang, the approach taken by China differs from that of Moscow. If only a minority of the Russian elite sympathize with the Pyongyang leadership and consider it necessary to keep it in power, the Chinese experience far more complex feelings on the matter. On one hand, Beijing is extremely unhappy about Pyongyang's efforts to build nuclear weapons and considers it unacceptable both from the standpoint of proliferation and because those weapons have fallen into the hands of such an unpredictable regime. Neither do the Chinese entertain any illusions about the character of the Pyongyang regime. At international conferences, Chinese specialists with close ties to governmental authorities openly refer to the Pyongyang regime as being “feudal,” “dictatorial,” “medieval” and so on.

On the other hand, wide swaths of Chinese society, governmental circles and especially the army have strong historical feelings regarding their North Korean “communist brothers.” People who participated in the war against South Korea are still alive, as is their influence, and monuments to the heroes of that war have been erected all across northern China. For the Beijing leadership now to pursue a course of fully isolating North Korea would mean admitting the complete failure and senselessness of all of its policies regarding the Korean peninsula from the very formation of the People's Republic of China, and would mean that the

²¹- Briefing by official Russian Foreign Ministry Representative A. Nesterenko on October 8, 2009, http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/1D8245069B6FD34EC32576490059CA89.

thousands of Chinese heroes of the Korean War had died in vain. To take such a step would be extremely difficult, both psychologically and politically.

Thus, the future of Russian policy regarding the North Korean nuclear problem will largely depend on the general atmosphere of international relations and the condition of its relations with the United States in particular. If the new climate of cooperation with Washington continues and develops, Moscow can take a more active position - for example, by encouraging China to exert greater pressure on North Korea. If U.S.-Russian relations worsen, Russia will follow its previous tack of easing sanctions and employing only verbal admonitions against the North Korean regime.

It is another question as to what Russia's actions might be should the situation in North Korea suddenly become unstable as a result of the leader's death and a subsequent power struggle. In that case, Moscow's actions will probably be focused on eliminating the danger of any possible military conflict or nuclear accident, and on preventing an uncontrolled flow of North Korean migrants into Russian territory. In that event, Russia will be ready to cooperate with North Korea's other neighbors - primarily China and South Korea - in the search for ways to bring the situation under control.

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A Divided Korea and the Reunification Strategy

Jae Chang Kim

Abstract

When the Soviet Union dismantled in the early 1990s, there was no significant disparity between Germany and Korea in terms of political options and the opportunity presented. However, the results were quite different. South Korea was not prepared to exploit the chance for the reunification of the Korean peninsula. A new environment for the reunification of the Korean peninsula emerged in the beginning of the 21st century. Although relations among the regional powers based on realism remain intact, the flexibility increases in politics as economic interdependence increases. The international order after the Cold War supports the reunification of the Korean peninsula and the internal situation within the Korean peninsula appears to be a dominant variable in shaping the reunification environment. The most important issue is to recover and strengthen the social Tao in the creation of a state of accord between the leader and the public in South Korea. It is recommended to prioritize the establishment of a strong Tao in order to prepare for the opportunities of the 21st century.

Key Words: Tao(道), reunification, buffer state, Korean peninsula, interdependence

Introduction

In the fall of 1990, Major General Von Schewen of the West German Army was summoned to the Headquarters of the Defense Department. When he arrived, he was promoted to Lieutenant General and ordered to take command of the entire East German Army. When he arrived in East Germany, there were only colonels in command because all the generals in the entire East German Army had retired. Secret documents safely stored in the cabinets of the political officers located next to the commanding officers of the regular Army became vital in understanding how the East German armed forces had worked. An important byproduct was to gain access to the list of people living in West Germany who had covertly sworn allegiance and loyalty to the East German government. General Von Schewen was invited to Seoul to share his experiences on German reunification and detail his role in the military integration of the former East-West antagonists.

General Von Schewen expressed his appreciation of the soldiers of the East German Army (both officers and enlisted soldiers) for the cooperation they gave throughout the difficult mission of bringing together the armies of a divided nation. The comparison between the Tiananmen Square protests in China of 1989 and the German reunification that took place in the same period is memorable and was given special mention. It was the unanimous opinion of East and West German officers involved in the process of German reunification, that if one unit had taken a tank out to protest in the streets of Berlin (possibly leading to a local and national breakout) or if some East German soldiers had resisted, the reunification of Germany would have been much different.

The East German officer corps actively supported the transition toward democracy.¹

National reunification is the most natural desire of all Koreans, however many in the South now believe that it is an unattainable goal. When the Soviet Union was dismantled (both physically and ideologically) in the early 1990s, Germany and Korea were equal in terms of the political options and the opportunities provided. However, the results were quite different.

One difference between the Korean peninsula and Germany is the geopolitical influence of China (an ally of North Korea in the Korean War in 1950). Even so, could we have taken a further step toward reunification if China had cooperated such as Hungary and Austria had done so with Germany? Probably it was not. South Korea was limited in the capability and the means to work toward reunification; in addition, it was also virtually unprepared to resolve the complexities relating to reunification in terms of external and internal variables.

This paper identifies the complexity of the Korean issue and investigates the reunification strategy of the Korean peninsula according to three variables: characteristics of the Northeast Asia regional situation, the features of the 21st century international relations, and the internal situation of the Korean peninsula.

¹-Dal R. Herspring, *Requiem for an Army: The Demise of the East German Military* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, Inc. 1998), p. xi.

Complexity of the Korean Issue: Multi-variable Equation

It is difficult for a separated nation (such as the two Koreas) to coexist because the two countries are separated only by political agendas. There are no different, ethnic groups (such as in the case of the Czechs and the Slavs), historical backgrounds, cultures, or customs. It is unnatural for two countries that share the same history and roots to remain separate. This commonality makes it easy to misjudge how a simple direct approach could quickly reunify the Korean peninsula.

During the Korean War, Kim Il Sung assumed that reunification by means of military force could be achieved in less than three months. However, he did not foresee the rapid intervention and military commitment by the United States. Kim Il Sung was able to read the internal factors, but failed to examine the external ones.²

General MacArthur, the architect of the Inchon Landing, foresaw that North Korean formal resistance to the United Nations in Korea would end by Thanksgiving of 1950. However, he failed to predict the military intervention of the People's Republic of China.³ General MacArthur could make a precise judgment of the physical war-fighting capability of the new born China based on a rational assessment, but lacked the situational awareness of the regional factors reflected in the long history of Northeast Asia.

Mao Zedong was confident that the People's Volunteer Army (PVA) of China could completely drive the United States armed forces off of

²- Sergei Goncharov, John Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 142.

³- William Stueck, *The Korean War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 107.

the Korean peninsula after the Marshal of the PVA, Peng Dehuai, led successful operations of the first and the second offensives to the 38th parallel. This miscalculation implies that Mao Zedong also lacked the ability to analyze the larger realities of the international order.

Former Secretary of State of the United States Henry Kissinger (an authority in the field of international relations) argues that General MacArthur should have stopped the advancement of the UN forces at the Pyongyang-Wonsan line. His logic is that the original purpose of the entry into the war by the UN forces was to drive the North Korean Army beyond and up to 100 miles further north of the 38th parallel as a disciplinary measure. According to Kissinger, the deviation from the original objective of a military and political compromise to one of total victory was the reason for the entry of the Chinese forces.⁴

It was deeply moving when General Paik Sun Yup (a veteran of the Korean War) recalled that “every piece of land we are standing on now was earned by blood,” a testament to the effort it took for the Korean Army and the UN forces to reach Pyongyang.⁵ Although it is counterfactual, it could have been almost impossible for the UN troops to stop along the Pyongyang-Wonsan (P-W) line, considering the surge of the counter-offensive that made so many sacrifices to reach there. However, some people opine that if the UN forces had stopped at the P-W line, that China might not have intervened.

All these military and political leaders failed to reach a conclusive end to the war because they approached the multi-faceted problems of the

⁴- Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1994), pp. 478-483.

⁵- *Speech by General Paik Sun Yup on the Anniversary of the Korean War in War Museum*, June 2009.

Korean peninsula with a one-dimensional mind.

Opportunity Does Not Wait for the Unprepared

South Korea was unprepared to exploit the opportunity for the reunification of the peninsula when the former Soviet Union was dismantled. While East Germany participated in the first free elections in March of 1990 that was followed by the reunification treaty between the two Germanys, the two Koreas had barely begun to talk on the matter of reconciliation, exchange, and non-aggression between the two. The two Koreas had been longtime antagonists and the beginning of the talks itself excited Koreans who wanted peaceful reunification, but also external observers who wished for a stable transition on the Korean peninsula.

Although North Korea officially participated in the dialogue of how to increase exchanges between the two Koreas, it in reality took measures to prohibit information flow into the North through various media from the South. The North feared the inflow of news from the outside world, believing that it would contaminate Northern society and threaten the existence of the regime. The two Koreas discussed and agreed on the exchange of letters between the peoples of both Koreas, but could not agree on the practical process. Through a long negotiation, what they eventually achieved was an agreement on reconciliation, non-aggression, and cooperation between the South and the North. The document was ratified and accepted by both governments, but no progress could be made in the implementation stage because the North did not want to move forward.

From the beginning, the two Koreas had different objectives in the dialogue: the North shrewdly attempted to evade the external pressure to open and change North Korean society after the demise of the Soviet Union, while the South naively expected some possible change in the North through dialogue. For the North Korean regime, the talk was only a means to let the world community perceive that the two Koreas were cooperating toward reunification. As a result, the North achieved objectives through the process of a dialogue between the two Koreas, whereas the South failed to exploit the historical opportunity for reunification after the collapse of the Iron Curtain.

Korea retains a tragic legacy from the war in 1950 when the North initiated a war against the South in an attempted reunification by military means. It took three years of sacrifice and cost the lives of millions on both sides until the belligerents agreed on an armistice at the point where the war had started. The experience of the Korean War provides a strong message that any attempt to achieve Korean reunification by military means is meaningless.

The reunification strategy of South Korea does not include the use of military force, but relies solely on peaceful means which is a long-term project. We have to wait until the North changes internally, although we wanted the North to hold free elections as East Germany did in 1990. However, this did not mean just waiting, but also shaping the environment and conditions for positive change internally as well as externally in the North. South Korea had devoted itself to internal security and invested less effort in shaping the environment and conditions for reunification. South Korea recognized that a historic chance for reunification passed by in the 1990s, now it cannot persuade the

North to move together toward reunification or request neighboring powers to support the movement. Although South Korea was unprepared to exploit the chance for change in the 1990s, this mistake must not be repeated in the future.

Investigating Reunification Strategy According to Three Variables

Northeast Asian Regional Situation and the Reunification Strategy

A buffer state is a relatively small state between two larger potentially rival powers. Korea was a typical buffer state during the era of Russo- Japanese War.⁶ In dealing with buffer states, great powers usually had three options: sanctioning the neutrality of the buffer state, agreeing on and initiating partition, or making decisions on whether or not to go to war against each other over the buffer state.⁷ The first method is to force the buffer state to maintain political neutrality while guaranteeing its independence. The second method is to control the state by slicing up the nation. The last method is to gain exclusive possession of the country by gaining victory over other potential suitors for the buffer state. The fate of the buffer state is left to the law of the jungle to be fought militaristically and politically in three different ways.

Korea is a state that has gone through all three examples of the

⁶- Seung-Young Kim, *American Diplomacy and Strategy toward Korea and Northeast Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 13, 20.

⁷- Michael Greenfield Partem, "The buffer state system in international relations," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (March 1983).

buffer state. Both the Russo-Japanese War and the Sino-Japanese War were fought to gain full control over the Korean peninsula by one of the neighboring powers. All three countries, Russia, Japan, and China, considered Korea a typical buffer state in the East Asian region.

The most serious problem is that such geopolitical distinction has continued throughout the 20th century. At the end of the World War II, the Soviet Union demanded the guarantee of the sphere of influence over the Far East that the Tsar of Russia had maintained until the Russo-Japanese War in return for participation in the Pacific Theater of Operations. The Yalta Conference accommodated these Soviet demands.⁸ The 38th parallel and the division of the Korean peninsula is the by product of the Yalta Conference agreement.

The Chinese Communist Army joined the Korean War to expel the U.S. presence in Korea to recover the influence it had in the hemisphere prior to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894. The two cases had implications that both China and Russia thought of Korea as a buffer state. Such underlying motives are still present in neighboring states and are likely to resurface and influence many of the foreign policies of countries such as Japan, China, and Russia.

China is a rising and competing regional power with Japan. If Sino-Japanese relations in the 21st century develop into an amicable agreement, then this development will be beneficial to the process of the reunification of the Korean peninsula. However, if the relationship becomes antagonistic, then it could become an obstacle to the process of reunification. If North Korea does not abandon nuclear ambitions

⁸ - Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1994), pp. 415-418.

and continues to challenge the international order, the reunification of the Korean peninsula will become more complex. If Korea does not have enough power to support the reunification agenda, then there exists a possibility that neighboring powers may intervene in North Korean matters similar to when they treated Korea as a buffer state in the 19th century.

The conclusion that the reason for the 60-year division of Korea is based on a single military dimension that includes maintaining the armistice and preventing North Korea from initiating war is not a realistic understanding of the problem as a whole. It is imperative to understand that the geopolitical issue remains unchanged and at the forefront of the division of the Korean peninsula.

One important concern is the rising regional economic interdependency. As economic interdependency grows, it is increasingly unrealistic to analyze relations among regional powers based solely on a traditional balance of power view. The concept of a buffer state becomes less dominant as the relations among regional countries move closer to a complex interdependence.⁹ In the same logic, it is expected that the ‘Teeth and Lips’ concept of Mao Zedong in the 1950s can be modified to be more flexible, although the security belt for China remains intact. One anonymous Chinese scholar argued years ago that China would not unilaterally support a North Korean initiated war on the Korean peninsula. China needs regional stability for continued economic development and any aggressive North Korean military policy is not in the interests of China. It became clear that China would

⁹- See Joseph Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts* (New York: Longman, 2003), p. 205 for “Complex Interdependence.”

not sacrifice its economic interests for the relations of “Teeth and Lips.”¹⁰

The International Order in the 21st Century and the Reunification Strategy

There is a need to understand the structure of the current international security system and its characteristics in order to understand the global security environment of the 21st century. Although some argue non-polarity as the nature of the international system,¹¹ most would agree that the security structure of the 21st century consists of the United States as the sole super power and several great powers in the system. There exists a need to review the characteristics of the system that may influence the regional order and the process of the reunification of the Korean peninsula. First, the United States (as the only remaining superpower) will identify the international order and national interests as the same; lesser powers will consider national interest as the primary concern of international relations. Second and consequently, it is inevitable for the United States to intervene in almost all major and minor conflicts in the world that may influence the international order. Probably, no conflict of various levels in the international community could be resolved without the influence of the United States. Third, the tendency to unilateralism by the U.S. will also increase as the role of the United States in international security increases. Contrary to that, lesser powers will tilt toward multilateralism for conflict resolution in the international community. Fourth, a remote possibility exists in the formation of two exclusive blocs

¹⁰-See Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas* (The U.S.: Basic Books, 2001), p. 240 for the change in the Chinese stance.

¹¹-Richard N. Hass, “The age of non-polarity,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/ June 2008.

as in the Cold War era as long as no country significantly challenges the military supremacy of the United States. However, temporary engagements as well as disengagements of nations will surface based on national interests and situational demands. Lastly, although there are various processes, it is inevitable that the value system that America adheres to will gradually spread throughout the international community.

To confirm the above characteristics, the Obama administration is trying to avoid the remnants of the foreign policies of the Bush administration that are criticized as unilateralism. Instead, the focus is on building stronger ties with allies and trying to find multilateral solutions to international conflicts. An example is the emphasis by President Obama on the role of the Six-Party Talks in regards to the North Korean nuclear issue. Although North Korea has become increasingly unpredictable, the response of the Obama administration remains prudent and patient; it is too early to form any conclusion about the U.S. strategy of the new administration toward North Korea. The position by President Obama on the global war on terrorism is a good indicator of future strategies.

President Obama announced in March 2009 that the United States would take a comprehensive approach to the global war on terrorism by Al Qaeda and its associates. It would apply so-called “smarter power” that includes an appropriate mix of hard power and soft power but the strategy to destroy all Al Qaeda forces in the area remains. Akin to the Marshal Plan after the World War II in Europe, the United States will provide economic support for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and support the increase of the capabilities of the local police force around the region to control the area of operations. Isolated terrorists will be destroyed

through military means. On the outset, the strategy seems soft and flexible; in reality, the strategy calls for the United States to grasp both soft power and hard power in a flexible application to situations and retain a strong military capability as a reserve for the decisive moment.

After the Korea-U.S. summit in June 2009, the two presidents announced that “there is a path for North Korea to take in which they are joining the world community” implying that the opportunity for peace and prosperity is still possible for North Korea.¹² The announcement can be interpreted that the U.S. policy toward North Korea is based on a comprehensive approach.

It is clear that the United States will make preemptive initiatives to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue rather than follow the past behavior of reacting after the fact to the moves of North Korea. At the same time, it seems that this comprehensive approach has a clear objective and does not deny the possibility of the use of military force as a last resort. In addition, the two leaders agreed, “Through our Alliance we aim to build a better future for all people on the Korean peninsula, establishing a durable peace on the Peninsula and leading to peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy.”¹³

The international security structure of the 21st century supports the reunification of the Korean peninsula based on the principles of democracy, human rights, and a market economy. Since Washington and Seoul share these principles, it is important to increase the traditional and strong ties with the United States to shape a more favorable enviro-

¹²-Obama and Lee Press Conference, The White House, June 16, 2009.

¹³-Joint Vision For The Alliance Of The United States Of America And The Republic Of Korea, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Washington, DC, June 16, 2009.

onment in Northeast Asia for the reunification of the two Koreas.

The Internal Situation within the Korean Peninsula and the Reunification Strategy

The Basic Agreement between South Korea and North Korea¹⁴ described, “their relations, not being a relationship between states, constitute a special interim relationship stemming from the process toward reunification.” This statement has the implication that the two Koreas will temporarily coexist, but are bound to reunite. The end-state is already given in the conclusion that the separated nations are one in nature and origin.

The description that “a special interim relationship stemming from the process toward reunification”¹⁵ could be analyzed in two dimensions: one is for the non-military arena in which both Koreas can pursue reconciliation and cooperation, whereas the other is for the military arena in which both have to compete for survival and for reunification on their terms and by all means. The military arena between the two Koreas has two battlefronts; one is the conventional military competition and the other is politico-psychological warfare.

For the last 60 years the South Korean security strategy was to deter war, and preventive measures have been taken to prevent North Korea from initiating another war. Therefore, in every field, South Korea tried to avoid any move that might agitate North Korea and develop into a military conflict. As a result, the defense posture of the South was always

¹⁴ - *Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between South and North Korea*, February 19, 1992.

¹⁵ - *Ibid.*

one step behind that of North Korea in quality as well as in quantity, creating an arms imbalance between the two Koreas. Despite the military imbalance between the two Koreas, only the Korea-U.S. military alliance dissuaded the North from initiating another war.

The imbalance in the arena of the politico-psychological warfare has led to a grave and serious reality. South Korea has been exposed to the North Korean political psychological agenda for many decades because North Korea is a regulated society while South Korea is an open and free society. This imbalance has contaminated South Korean society ideologically to an extent that even the identity of the Korean society has been shaken. It is evident that the pro-North Korea politico-psychological influence is present in South Korea.

Sun Tzu describes such a reality in a world lacking “Tao”(道).¹⁶ Tao is what brings the thinking of the people in line with superiors and leaders in a modern society. Social Tao is the situation where the leader earns respect from citizens and where government policies are fully praised and supported by citizens. According to Sun Tzu, this social Tao is the most important factor in deciding the outcome of war, especially in a civil war.¹⁷ In essence, a country that lacks Tao cannot win a war no matter how powerful the army may be.

The most advisable course of military strategy is to prevent conflict. However, it is dangerous for a society to lose ground in a politico-psychological warfare because that influences the Tao of the society. Especially, the military will also fall in a civil war environment when Tao

¹⁶ - Roger T. Ames, translated, *Sun Tzu: The Art of Warfare* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), p. 103.

¹⁷ - *Ibid.*, p. 103.

is broken. Although the imbalance in military power can be compensated by the aid of a military alliance, the broken Tao cannot be fixed by external aid; a nation must fix the problem itself.

The generation responsible for the economic development of South Korea in the 20th century experienced the provocation and violence of armed North Korean agents. At the same time, they saved money in order to resurrect their families and the nation with the slogan, "Let's Construct While Fighting." This slogan had a greater meaning as it meant triumph in an ongoing competition with the North and that a unified Korea would realize the South as the superior system. In that period, citizens of South Korea actually fought to rebuild the country based on the ideals of democracy, peace, and national unity.

The vision of a unified Korea based on a free democracy started to lose its appeal when lives became comfortable and complacent as economic power reached a certain level that forgot the previous sacrifices. During that process, the national Tao was lost, too. South Korea must recover the determined and hard working nature of the generation that rebuilt South Korea because that is how to rebuild the social Tao in Korea society. If we do not have a strong will to carry on the mandate passed on by the previous generation and maintain the desire to achieve a unified democratic nation, the Korean peninsula will never unify under the name of democracy and freedom.

There are around 700 to 800 senior-level representatives in the current North Korean regime. These political elites are the puppets of Kim Jong-il. They follow every decision and move by the supreme ruler of North Korea. However, it is a reasonable speculation that even the highest officials of the North Korean government would not agree to let

their children live forever in the current state of North Korea; they would prefer their children to live in a society where freedom and human rights are guaranteed. The South must have a strong national will to convince and induce North Korea to change. We cannot achieve the grand history that reaches far beyond the horizon without an agreement by the people of North and South Korea to move forward.

The Northeast Asian regional situation remains an important variable. However, the degree of seriousness of the geopolitical concern among the neighboring countries will decrease as economic interdependence grows. The international order in the 21st century is different from the Cold War but still supports the reunification of the Korean peninsula. However, internal situation within the Korean peninsula appears to be a dominant variable in shaping the environment and conditions for reunification. The most important priority is to recover and strengthen the social Tao in South Korea in order to establish the national Tao throughout the Korean peninsula.

Three Principles to Rebuild the National “Tao” (道)

The strategic theory of Sun Tzu focuses on individuals and personal intentions because Sun Tzu believes that war (especially civil war) is a matter of human existence. He defines war a vital matter of state.¹⁸ In order to win a war, which is the vital matter of state, it was essential to lead the people in complete accord with the ruler. He explains that the status of Tao means that all the vectors of the people direct a singular objective of the leader physically as well as psychologically. By the same logic, the

¹⁸ - *Ibid.*, p. 103.

reunification of a country is a great matter of state in addition to being a matter of the people and personal intention. Sun Tzu argues that Tao is the dominant factor that estimates which side will win a war and that it determines which side will achieve national reunification on preferred terms.

Three principles are proposed to achieve the outcome. First is the principle of the objective. In order to lead the people into complete accord with the ruler, the ruler has to present his objective and the people must willingly accept it. In order for this objective to take effect, it must have a clear identity and a simplicity that is clearly understood.

In order to achieve a strong Tao for reunification, the government has to present the people a clear objective that can be easily identified in the conscientious acceptance of it. The goal of the reunified Korea must be a liberal democracy and a market economy, and guaranteed human rights. These make the best possible economic, political, and social environment based on the historical development of universal human values and civilization. This is also the just outcome of an ideological rivalry between the two Koreas that fought to identify which system is superior for Korea.

A strong national Tao will be established when every citizen moves toward the singular objective of an eventual reunified Korea based on a liberal democracy. The objective loses its value if it is not possible to tell whether the direction is toward a liberal democracy, a people's democracy, or a dictatorship. Citizens will be lost in a vast sea of political propaganda if the compass is unclear.

South Korea must announce its objective to the international community to gain help and support when it is required. The grand

project must be tasked to the next generation if reunification between North and South Korea cannot be immediately accomplished. We must dedicate the nation to educate and pass down national objectives and direction. Only then will the plan take shape to turn the vision into reality.

Second is the principle of the offensive. Just as a CEO must advertise products to gain a competitive advantage in a market, in order to gain a driving force that moves toward the objective, the South Korean government must propagandize the objective of reunification. We cannot achieve reunification based on a liberal democracy if we continue to maintain a defensive position against North Korea. South Korea must clearly define the vision of reunification to North Korea. Only when North Korean compatriots accept the free democratic system with their hearts and minds will a peaceful reunification be possible.

There is a memorable story about the fall of the Berlin Wall. There was a hole in the barrier that many East German people escaped through and one person wrote a witty remark as he was making his escape. "Mr. Honecker, if you become the last person to escape East Germany, please don't forget to turn off the lights." The leader of East Germany Erich Honecker would persist until the last person escaped East Germany. Only then would he also have to wave the white flag and turn off the lights when the inevitable happened. This showed the democratic spirit and desire for freedom among East Germans that made the reunification of Germany possible.

Tolerance for uniqueness and variety is a strength of an open society, however sometimes such a society crumbles and falls under the

constant propaganda of a uniformed society. South Korea must defend against the North Korean political-psychological warfare, and an offensive stance is the best way to defend against the proliferation of political propaganda. A comprehensive approach integrating various measures must be implemented to counter North Korean psychological schemes.

The last is the principle of concentration. South Korea must invest in the fields that contribute directly to the national objective in order to achieve maximum productivity with limited resources. It is inevitable that there will be an imbalance in the distribution of resources among different fields. However, we must invest in selected fields and support the establishment of a grand national Tao that embraces all seventy million Koreans. These actions will lead to the eventual reunification of a free and democratic Korea.

We must remain patient, but not miss the right circumstances and opportunities for reunification based on a liberal democracy. Sun Tzu stated, "Invincibility depends on oneself; vulnerability lies with the enemy."¹⁹ One of the characteristics of a civil war is that governments do not fall by an outer force but by internal factors. This implies that North Korea must fall internally for the divided Korean peninsula to reunite. That is the justification for South Korea to build a strong national Tao that moves the national objectives forward to a reunification based on a liberal democracy.

¹⁹ - *Ibid.*, p. 115.

Conclusion

North Korea has reacted unpredictably since it became isolated from the international community. Although the military threat has reached a critical point, the internal collapse of North Korea has perhaps already begun when observed from a long-term military-political view. South Korea should be prepared to shape the favorable environment and conditions for national reunification based on the strong national Tao in order not avoid the mistakes of the 1990s.

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Demise of Russian-Chinese Arms Relationship and Its Korean Implications

Richard Weitz

Abstract

China and Russia share a concern with the evolving political, military, and economic situation on the Korean peninsula, which borders both countries. In terms of relative influence in Pyongyang, however, Beijing enjoys a clearly dominant role, while Moscow often struggles to maintain even a supporting position. One development that might further increase this gap is the abrupt decrease in recent Chinese purchases of Russian defense technologies and weapons systems. The major reason for this transformation has been that the Chinese defense industry has become capable of producing much more sophisticated armaments. Moscow now confronts the choice of either accepting a greatly diminished share of the Chinese arms market or agreeing to sell even more advanced weapons to Beijing. In addition to threatening existing force balances in East Asia, such transfers could further strengthen China's ability to compete for sales on third-party markets. Thus far, surging Russian arms sales to other countries have allowed Russian policy makers to accept the decreasing Chinese military purchases rather than risk the transfer of new technologies. Even so, the threat to Russian arms exports presented by the global recession may cause more Russians to seek short-term profits by allowing the sale to China of even their most advanced systems, which would make China and even more formidable competitor for sales to North Korea and other third-party markets.

Key Words: Russia, China, arms, weapons, Rosoboronexport

This year, the Russian and Chinese governments are marking the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Moscow and the People's Republic of China (PRC). The two governments have issued a series of joint statements affirming their common approach to important international questions. For example, their 60th anniversary joint statement, devoted several paragraphs to their “grave concern over the situation on the Korean peninsula.”¹ The two governments have repeatedly called for a peaceful resolution of the dispute over North Korea's nuclear weapons within the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

Introduction

China and Russia share a concern with the evolving political, military, and economic situation on the Korean peninsula, which borders both countries. The governments in Beijing and Moscow have opposed North Korea's acquisition of nuclear weapons while simultaneously resisting international initiatives that they believe could create chaos on the Korean peninsula. Both Beijing and Moscow desire a change in Pyongyang's behavior, but not a change in its regime. They remain more concerned about the potential immediate collapse of the North Korean state than about its government's intransigence on the nuclear question. Despite their differences with Kim Jong-il, Chinese and Russian leaders fear that the North Korea's disintegration could induce widespread economic disruptions in East Asia, generate large refugee flows across

¹- “China, Russia Sign Five-Point Joint Statement,” *Xinhua*, June 17, 2009, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-06/18/content_11558133.htm.

their borders, weaken Chinese and Russian influence in the Koreas by ending their unique status as interlocutors with Pyongyang, and potentially remove a buffer separating their borders from American ground forces (i.e., should the U.S. Army redeploy into northern Korea). At worst, the North Korea's collapse could precipitate a military conflict on the peninsula – which could spill across into Chinese or Russian territory. Policy makers in both countries appear to have resigned themselves to dealing with Kim Jong-il for now, while hoping a more accommodating leadership will eventually emerge in Pyongyang.

In terms of relative influence in Pyongyang, however, Beijing enjoys a clearly dominant role, while Moscow often struggles to maintain even a supporting position. One development that might further increase this gap is the continuing deterioration of the Russia-China arms relationship. The abrupt decrease in Chinese purchases of Russian defense technologies and weapons systems has contributed both to a severe contraction of the overall level of commerce between the two countries as well as sharp turning of the terms of trade against Russia. Whereas before 2007 Russia racked up steady trade surpluses, during the last two years the terms of trade have been shifting markedly in China's favor due to a decline in Chinese purchase of weapons systems and other high-technology items and increasing Russian purchases of cheap Chinese cars, electronics, and other consumer goods. At present, Russian exports to China consist overwhelmingly of commodities, especially natural resources like oil and timber, while China sells mostly consumer goods such as household appliances, machinery, and other higher-value products to Russia. North Korea and other former Soviet allies now purchase many imported weapons from Chinese suppliers that in earlier years they acquired from

Russian sources.

After the United States and European governments imposed an arms embargo on China following the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, China became one of Russia's most reliable purchasers of imported arms. In any given year, Beijing bought between one-fourth and one-half of Russia's weapons exports. Indeed, during most of the past two decades, Russian military exports to China constituted the most important dimension of the two countries' security relationship. Russian firms derived substantial revenue from the sales, which helped sustain Russia's military industrial complex during the lean years of the 1990s. For its part, China was able to acquire advanced conventional weapons that its developing defense industry could not yet manufacture. The PRC managed to purchase certain weapons systems from Israel and Brazil as well, but their portfolio of exportable arms is limited and Israel has proven susceptible to American pressure to curtail sales of advanced systems.

Recent years have seen a major change in this situation. The volume of Russian weapons sales to the Chinese military has experienced a precipitous decline. The major reason for this transformation has been that the Chinese defense industry has become capable of producing much more sophisticated armaments. Moscow now confronts the choice of either accepting a greatly diminished share of the Chinese arms market or agreeing to sell even more advanced weapons to Beijing. In addition to threatening existing force balances in East Asia, such transfers could further strengthen China's ability to compete for sales on third-party markets. Thus far, surging Russian arms sales to other countries has allowed Russian policy makers to accept the decreasing Chinese

military purchases rather than risk the transfer of new technologies. Even so, the threat to Russian arms exports presented by the global recession may cause more Russians to seek short-term profits by allowing the sale to China of even their most advanced systems, further enhancing Beijing's influence in Pyongyang.

Changing Market Conditions

Since the two governments signed an agreement on military-technical cooperation in December 1992, the PRC has acquired almost all its defense imports from the Russian Federation — more than 90 percent.² During the 1990s, the value of these deliveries ranged up to one billion dollars annually. During the mid-2000s, this figure has sometimes exceeded two billion dollars per year. According to one estimate, between 1992 and 2006, the total value of Russian arms exports to China amounted to approximately \$26 billion worth of military equipment and weapons, or almost half of total Russian arms exports, estimated at more than \$58 billion during that period.³ In April 2009, Anatoly Isaikin, general director of Rosoboronexport, Russia's state-run arms export body, confirmed that the value of Russia-China defense cooperation since 2001 approximated \$16 billion, with the annual value of the exchanges

²- Paul Holtom, "The Beginning of the End for Deliveries of Russian Major Conventional Weapons to China," *RIA Novosti*, March 31, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080331/102440239.html>.

³- David Lague, "Russia and China Rethink Arms Deals," *New York Times*, March 2, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/02/world/asia/02iht-arms.1.10614237.html>; and Alexandra Gritskova, Konstantin Lantratov, and Gennady Sysoev, "Kitay slozhil rossiyskoe oruzhie" [China Sets Aside Russian Arms], *Kommersant*, May 7, 2007.

reaching up to \$2.7 billion.⁴ These sales helped make Russia the world's largest arms supplier to Asian countries between 1998 and 2005, well ahead of the United States.⁵

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), China received 39% of all the major conventional weapons – e.g., aircraft carriers, submarines, ship-launched missiles, and long-range strike, tanker and transport aircraft but not small arms and light weaponry – sold to foreign buyers during the 17-year history of the Russian Federation. Through these dealings, the Chinese Navy and Air Force have acquired dozens of Su-27 Flanker fighter jets and Su-30 Flanker multi-role aircraft optimized for anti-ship operations; Mi-17 transport helicopters; Il-76 military transport aircraft; IL-78M Midas in-flight refueling tanker aircraft; A-50 warning and control aircraft; T-72 main battle tanks; Mi-8 and Mi-17 helicopters; armored personnel carriers; Kilo-class Project 636 diesel submarines; several Sovremenny-class destroyers; a variety of anti-ship, air defense, and other missiles; and other advanced conventional military systems or their components. Between 1998 and 2004, moreover, the Chinese manufactured about a hundred Su-27Sk war planes under Russian license, using many Russian parts in the assembly process.

⁴–“Gendirektor ‘Rosoboroneksporta’ Anatolij Isaikin: Nesmotrya na krizis, eksport nashego oruzhiya stavit rekordy,” *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, April 10, 2009, <http://www.rg.ru/2009/04/10/orujie.html>.

⁵–Richard F. Grimmett, *Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 1998-2005* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, October 23, 2006), p. 32, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/RL33696.pdf>.

Table 1. Sales of Major Russian Weapons Systems to China⁶

Weapon Designation	Weapon Description	Year of Order	Number Delivered
R-73/AA-11 Archer	SRAAM	1991	300
Su-27S/Flanker-B	FGA aircraft	1991	24
5V55R/SA-10C Grumble	SAM	1992	150
76N6/Clam Shell	Air surv radar	1992	1
Il-76M/Candid-B	Transport aircraft	1992	10
S-300PMU-1/SA-10D	SAM system	1992	4
ST-68U/Tin Shield	Air surv radar	1992	1
Su-27S/Flanker-B	FGA aircraft	1992	2
53-65K	AS torpedo	1993	75
TEST-71	AS/ASW torpedo	1993	75
Type-636E/Kilo	Submarine	1993	2
Type-877E/Kilo	Submarine	1993	2
Mi-8/Mi-17/Hip-H	Helicopter	1995	35
R-73/AA-11 Archer	SRAAM	1995	3000
Su-27S/Flanker-B	FGA aircraft	1995	24
9M38/SA-11 Gadfly	SAM	1996	150
Ka-27PL/Helix-A	ASW helicopter	1996	2
Sovremenny	Destroyer	1996	2
9M338/SA-15 Gauntlet	SAM	1997	400
Tor-M1/SA-15	Mobile SAM system	1997	15
9M338/SA-15 Gauntlet	SAM	1998	500
Ka-27PL/Helix-A	ASW helicopter	1998	8
Mi-8/Mi-17/Hip-H	Helicopter	1998	15
Tor-M1/SA-15	Mobile SAM system	1998	20
Kh-29/AS-14 Kedge	ASM	1999	100
Kh-59ME/AS-18 Kazoo	ASM	1999	150

⁶- The table is derived from data obtained from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Trade Register Table of Major Conventional Weapons Transfers from Russia to China generated July 19, 2009, <http://www.sipri.org/>. It includes the weapon designation, weapon description, year of the order, and the number delivered/produced from military arms sales from Russia to China from 1989 to 2008.

Weapon Designation	Weapon Description	Year of Order	Number Delivered
Su-27S/Flanker-B	FGA aircraft	1999	28
Su-30MK/Flanker	FGA aircraft	1999	38
AL-31FN	Turbofan	2000	54
Il-76M/Candid-B	Transport aircraft	2000	1
Moskit/SS-N-22	Anti-ship missile	2000	50
R-77/AA-12 Adder	BVRAAM	2000	700
48N6/SA-10D Grumble	SAM	2001	150
9M317/SA-17 Grizzly	SAM	2001	150
Fregat/Top Plate	Air surv radar	2001	8
Mi-8/Mi-17/Hip-H	Helicopter	2001	35
MR-90/Front Dome	Fire control radar	2001	8
S-300PMU-1/SA-10D	SAM system	2001	4
Su-30MK/Flanker	FGA aircraft	2001	38
Zhuk	Aircraft radar	2001	100
3M-54 Klub/SS-N-27	Anti-ship missile	2002	120
48N6/SA-10D Grumble	SAM	2002	150
53-65K	AS torpedo	2002	150
9M311/SA-19 Grison	SAM	2002	225
9M38/SA-11 Gadfly	SAM	2002	150
AK-630 30mm	Naval AA gun	2002	69
Moskit/SS-N-22	Anti-ship missile	2002	35
S-300FM/SA-N-20	naval SAM system	2002	2
Sovremenny	Destroyer	2002	2
TEST-71	AS/ASW torpedo	2002	150
Type-636E/Kilo	Submarine	2002	8
Zmei/Sea Dragon	MP aircraft radar	2002	1
Su-30MK/Flanker	FGA aircraft	2003	24
48N6E2/SA-10E	SAM	2004	297
S-300PMU-2/SA-10E	SAM system	2004	8
AK-176M 76mm	Naval gun	2005	5
AL-31FN	Turbofan	2005	100
Il-76M/Candid-B	Transport aircraft	2005	None delivered

Weapon Designation	Weapon Description	Year of Order	Number Delivered
Il-78M/Midas	Tanker/transport ac	2005	None delivered
Kh-59MK/AS-18	Anti-ship missile	2005	10
RD-33/RD-93	Turbofan	2005	18
48N6E2/SA-10E	SAM	2006	300
Mi-8/Mi-17/Hip-H	Helicopter	2006	24
S-300PMU-2/SA-10E	SAM system	2006	8

Table 2. Russian Weapons Produced under license in China⁷

Weapon Designation	Weapon Description	Year of Order	Number Produced
Su-27S/Flanker-B	FGA aircraft	1996	105
Kh-31A1/AS-17	Anti-ship missile	1997	585
Krasnopol-M	Guided shell	1997	1100
9M119/AT-11 Sniper	Anti-tank missile	1998	800
Mineral/Band Stand	Surface surv. radar	2005	4
MR-90/Front Dome	Fire Control radar	2005	16

Moscow's decision to sell advanced conventional weapons systems to China results primarily from economic rather than strategic considerations. Despite the recent rise in national defense spending, the Russian government resists allocating substantial financial resources to restructuring the national defense industry. Citing the need to avoid repeating the Soviet mistake of competing in a ruinously expensive arms race, Putin and other Russian leaders have reaffirmed their commitment to hold annual military expenditures to sustainable levels. For this reason,

⁷-Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Trade Register Table of Major Conventional Weapons Transfers from Russia to China generated July 19, 2009, <http://www.sipri.org/>.

they have encouraged Russian defense enterprises to sell their products abroad to earn additional revenue for reinvestment and to keep skilled workers from moving into civilian employment. Unlike energy – the other commercial sector where Russian exporters can compete effectively with foreign sellers – arms exports generate high-tech manufacturing employment as well as revenue. Government officials also appreciate that many Russian firms need increased investment capital to develop the type of advanced conventional weapons systems that have proven so effective for Western militaries in recent wars. International markets for Russian weapons systems, upgrades, maintenance, and spare parts help sustain production lines and workers that provide essential support for the Russian military.

Several considerations explain Chinese interest in acquiring Russian arms and military technology. Economic factors come into play insofar as, by purchasing foreign weapons, China avoids having to research, develop, and manufacture its own systems. Although China's indigenous arms industry has become more capable along with the rest of the economy, until recently Chinese defense enterprises still lagged behind their leading international counterparts in several key areas, such as advanced aviation and naval weapons. The 1989 Tiananmen Square incident led Western governments to prohibit their own companies from selling advanced military technologies to China, leaving Russia as the sole major remaining source of advanced foreign military technologies accessible to China. For its more sophisticated war planes, the PLA Air Force still relies on Russian-designed planes and engines. Although Russian government officials and defense enterprises preferred that China purchase finished systems weapons directly from Russian manufacturers that can be used

with the simple turn of a key, they proved amendable to meeting Chinese demands that many deals provide for some technology transfer to China, often through the licensed assembly of Russian weapons systems in Chinese factories.

Even so, China's increasingly sophisticated defense industry can now make many items that previously had to be acquired from Russian sources. As desired by PRC policy makers, the Chinese companies used the licensed production arrangements to transfer Russian technologies and manufacturing capabilities to China, allowing Chinese firms to produce substitutes. Chinese manufacturers are producing either more completely indigenous advanced weapons systems or more defense technologies, sub-systems, and other essential components that Chinese manufactures can insert directly into foreign-made systems. In January 2007, the Chinese military unveiled the Jian-10, a locally built fighter-bomber that uses Chinese engines and Chinese missiles.⁸

Concerns about the quality of the weapons China has been purchasing from Russia have also encouraged the PRC to seek to enhance its indigenous production capabilities. According to the Russian press, the Chinese have complained about performance problems with some of the weapons they have received from Russia as well as inadequate post-sale servicing of the weapons. Chinese representatives have also objected to lengthy delays in receiving some purchases due to production difficulties on the Russian side. For example, China cancelled a 2005 contract, worth an estimated \$1.5 billion, to acquire 34 Ilyushin Il-76MD transport, 4 Il-78MK in-flight refueling tanker aircraft, and 88 D-30KP-2 engines,

⁸ - Peter Ford, "Fighter Jet Signals China's Military Advances," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 11, 2007, www.csmonitor.com/2007/0111/p07s01-woap.htm.

after the TAPO factory in Uzbekistan that had supplied the air frames during the Soviet era proved unable to replicate that contribution in the post-Soviet period due to the retirement of key personnel and the breakdown or obsolescence of essential equipment.⁹ Russian negotiators subsequently proved unable to secure Chinese consent for a new contract with a later delivery date and a higher price. These quality and contract fulfillment problems apparently led the Chinese government to suspend meetings of the Russian-Chinese Intergovernmental Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation, which typically convenes twice a year.¹⁰ The full commission failed to meet from 2005, when it held its 12th session in Sochi, until December 9-11, 2008, when defense ministers Serdyukov and Liang finally convened its 13th session in Beijing.¹¹

The combined effect of these developments has been to reduce the share of Russia's arms exports to China from 40% of all sales in 2006 to less than 20% in 2007.¹² Sales of major weapons systems decreased from 54% in 2006 to 28% in 2007.¹³ China remained the single largest recipient of Russian arms thanks to the delivery of items purchased in earlier years (India's share was 20% in 2007, a significant increase from the 15% figure in 2006). In addition, no other foreign country has sold

⁹- Nikita Petrov, "Russian-Chinese Military Relations at a Low Point," *RIA Novosti*, May 27, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080527/108566309.html>.

¹⁰- Alexandra Gritskova, Konstantin Lantratov, and Gennady Sysoev, "Kitay slozhil rossiyskoe oruzhie," *Kommersant*, May 7, 2007.

¹¹- Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations: Embracing a Storm and Each Other?" *Comparative Connections: A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations*, January 2009, http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/0804qchina_russia.

¹²- Marcin Kaczmarek, "Wen Jiabao's Visit to Moscow Fails to Resolve Problems in Russian-Chinese Economic Relations," *CACI Analyst*, November 14, 2007.

¹³- Paul Holtom, "The Beginning of the End for Deliveries of Russian Major Conventional Weapons to China," *RIA Novosti*, March 31, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080331/102440239.html>.

Beijing sufficient weapons to challenge Russia's dominance of China's foreign defense purchases. Even so, the decline resulted in a 63% decrease in the value of Russian major weapons deliveries to China, which fell to their lowest level in a decade. The main reason for the decline was that, unlike in 2006, Russia did not deliver any warships or submarines to China in 2007.¹⁴ In any case, the decline contributed to a 29% reduction in Russia's overall export of major conventional weapons systems between 2006 and 2007.

Table 3. Russian Arms Sales to China since 1989¹⁵

(unit: million)

Year	USD	Year	USD
1990 (USSR)	81	2000	1,771
1991 (USSR)	133	2001	3,081
1992 (Russia)	1,150	2002	2,581
1993	1027	2003	2,031
1994	80	2004	2,828
1995	498	2005	3,232
1996	1,160	2006	3,535
1997	632	2007	1,298
1998	173	2008	1,109
1999	1,489		

Since 2005, China has not ordered additional Russian warships or warplanes or signed any new multibillion arms sale contracts. For instance, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) dashed Russian

¹⁴ - *Ibid.*

¹⁵ - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Trend Indicator Values Table of Arms Transfers into China from 1989 to 2008 generated July 19, 2009, <http://www.sipri.org>.

hopes and declined to purchase additional Su-30MK2 after receiving the first 24 aircrafts in 2004.¹⁶ Russian aspirations of selling China additional advanced air defense systems have also failed to materialize.¹⁷ With the exception of Beijing's continuing purchases of Mil Mi-17 assault/transport helicopters, recent Russian arms transfers have simply involved fulfilling past contracts or limited purchases of upgrades and specialized technology (such as aircraft engines) where Russian manufactures retain a clear advantage.¹⁸ In early 2009, for instance, China agreed to purchase over 100 engines for its J-10 fighter.¹⁹ At their 13th session of the Russian- Chinese Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation, which met in Beijing in December 2008, the two governments decided they would attempt joint development of new military products, which would not necessarily result in additional Russian weapons sales to China.²⁰ Although he anticipated further purchases of transport airplanes, aircraft engines, and perhaps more air defense and naval weapons, Rosoboronexport General Director Isaikin predicts a further decrease in the share of Russian arms sold to China in coming years, reaching perhaps as low a level as 10 percent of the value

¹⁶- Konstantin Makienko, "Fast Transformation," *Russia & CIS Observer*, Vol. 4, No 23 (November 2008), http://www.ato.ru/rus/cis/archive/23-2008/airshow/airshow1/?sess_ =uq7ne2nd0edsjfdi0t169qd6k6.

¹⁷- Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations: Medvedev's Ostpolitik and Sino-Russian Relations," *Comparative Connections: A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations*, July 2008, http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/0802qchina_russia.pdf.

¹⁸- Paul Holtom, "Outside View: Russia-China Row – Part 1," *United Press International*, April 7, 2008, http://www.upi.com/International_Security/Industry/Analysis/2008/04/07/outside_view_russia-china_row_--_part_1/3067. For additional details see SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <http://armstrade.sipri.org>.

¹⁹- "Russian Arms Exports to China May Drop Significantly," *RIA Novosti*, February 4, 2009, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090204/119981492.html>.

²⁰- Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations: Embracing a Storm."

of all Russian military exports.²¹ Some analysts suspect that the figure could shrink even further.²²

The decline in Russian arms sales to China has already adversely affected the trade balance between Russia and the PRC. Partly as a result of the transformation, Russia's annual bilateral trade with China has shifted from a multibillion dollar surplus in 2006 to a multibillion dollar deficit in 2007.²³ Although Russian-Chinese trade reached a record \$56.8 billion in 2008, year-on-year Sino-Russian trade fell 42% in January. Russian exports declined an amazing 59% from the previous January and by 17% in the last quarter of 2008 alone.²⁴ This trend marked a further deterioration in the trade balance against Russia. Before 2007, Russia racked up steady surpluses, thanks to large deliveries of energy, arms, and raw materials. That year, Russia increased its exports to China by 12.1% to \$19.67 billion, but Chinese sales to Russia surged by 79.9% to \$28.48 billion.²⁵ During the last three years, the terms of trade have been shifting markedly in China's favor due to a decline in Chinese purchase of weapons systems and other high-technology items and increasing Russian purchases of cheap Chinese cars, machinery tools, electronics, and other consumer goods.²⁶

²¹-Vadim Soloviev, "'Rosoboroneksport' ukreplyaet pozitsii," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, February 6, 2009, http://nvo.ng.ru/armament/2009-02-06/1_Rosoboroneksport.html.

²²-Michael Lelyveld, "China-Russia Oil Deal Masks Frictions," *Radio Free Asia*, May 18, 2009, http://www.rfa.org/english/energy_watch/china-russia-oil-05182009150213.html.

²³- "Russia-China Trade up 44% to Record \$48 bln in 2007," *RIA Novosti*, January 17, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20080117/97148666.html>.

²⁴- "Russia-China Trade up 18% to \$56.8 bln in 2008," *RIA Novosti*, February 12, 2009, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090212/120100347.html>.

²⁵- "China-Russia Bilateral Trade Hits \$48 bln in 2007," *RIA Novosti*, May 22, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/business/20080522/108086671.html>.

²⁶- *Ibid.*

Another looming threat could be possible competition from European defense companies if the European Union (EU) were to lift its comprehensive arms embargo on China, which the EU imposed after the 1989 Tiananmen massacre. By agreeing now to sell more advanced weapons to China, Russian defense suppliers would help lock in future sales and raise the barrier to entry for potential EU competitors. European firms would find it difficult to match the low-price advantage of Russian defense enterprises but might prove more competitive in terms of quality. Beijing policy makers might also seek to reward European firms if the European Union decided to remove its arms embargo.

Moscow's Choice

The ongoing improvement in the quality of China's national defense production, and the ever present threat of additional foreign competition confronts Russian officials with a difficult choice. Until now, the Russian government has refused to sell its most sophisticated weapons systems — such as long-range ballistic missiles or strategic bombers — to China for fear that such weapons could disrupt the balance of power in East Asia. The Russian government has also declined to sell China weapons — such as advanced land warfare weapons or tactical air support aircraft — that could assist the PLA in a ground war with Russia. Instead, Russia has transferred advanced weapons mostly for naval warfare and air defense. Moscow's restraint has meant that Russian arms sales to Beijing have not been sufficient by themselves to enable China to defeat the more technologically advanced militaries of Taiwan or Japan. Nevertheless, Chinese companies should soon be able to substitute their own

technologies for many of the expensive defense items the PLA has acquired from Russian suppliers in the past.

In order to restore its share of China's defense market, the Russian government could decide to sell these ground-force weapons, more advanced naval and air systems, and other previously "off-limit" products. Russian sources related that the PLA's General Armaments Department would like to purchase large quantities of Russian-made infantry flame-throwers self-propelled guns and artillery systems, multiple-launch rocket systems, infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers, advanced attack and ship-borne helicopters, three-dimensional radars, naval surface-to-air missiles on vertical launchers, and electronic countermeasures systems, as well as engines and other components and technologies for manufacturing fourth-generation and fifth-generation aircraft.²⁷

Certain Russian officials seem open to selling at least some of these weapons. On August 26, 2005, a "high-ranking source in the Russian Defense Ministry" told the Russian news agency *Interfax-AVN* that Russia had deliberately showcased their Tu-95MS and the Tu-22M3 at the bilateral August "Peace Mission 2005" exercises to entice Chinese buyers. Although these strategic bombers are older platforms (the Tu-160 is Russia's most advanced strategic bomber), they can launch long-range cruise missiles against air and ground targets, including U.S. aircraft carriers.²⁸ The sales motive was also evident in the Russian decision to

²⁷- Martin Sieff, "Defense Focus: Russia-China Arms Slump," *United Press International*, February 10, 2009, http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Defense_Focus_Russia-China_arms_slump_999.html.

²⁸- Vladimir Ubran, "Posledniy rekord rossiyskogo oruzhiya," *Moskovskie Novosti*, June 17, 2005. The U.S. Department of Defense also concluded that the Russians might

leave the bombers that participated in the exercise, as well as other types of military aircraft, on display in China for several additional days. The policy of exploiting the opportunity to highlight a few advanced weapons systems to the Chinese during the exercise may have worked since Beijing placed a large order for one of the participating warplanes, the Il-78 tanker, a few weeks later.²⁹

Moscow might also decide to offer Chinese defense firms some advanced weapons systems that Russian defense companies are beginning to produce. For example, Moscow could approve the sale of Russia's fourth-generation diesel-electric (Lada class) submarines, which would also increase China's military potential against the United States and its Pacific allies. They could also sell China their most advanced combat aircraft, such as the Su-33 and Su-35.³⁰ More than 50 Russian firms displayed their wares at the Sixth China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition, held in October-November 2006 in Zhuhai in southern China.³¹ At the November 2008 Zuhai Air Show, Chinese officials asked many questions about the Su-35, which began flying earlier in the year, but declined to agree to purchase any of them.³² In the past, a senior Russian defense official, Alexander Denisov, said that Russia was

have been exploiting the exercise to show off advanced weapons systems to potential Chinese buyers. See Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2006*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2006, p. 2.

²⁹-Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations: The New World Order According to Moscow and Beijing," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 7, No. 3, October 2005, p. 148.

³⁰-Alyson J. K. Bailes (ed.), *SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 454.

³¹- "China Intends to Buy Russia's Su-33," *RIA Novosti*, November 1, 2006, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20061101/55289379.html>.

³²- "China, Russia Vow to Step Up Military Ties," *AFP*, December 12, 2008, <http://www.wsichina.org/morningchina/article.asp?id=3885>.

even prepared to assist China in the design of an aircraft carrier. Denisov told the media, “Such a request would not contradict any international agreements or rules.”³³ The Russian media has carried reports of alleged Russian help to China regarding possible development of an aircraft carrier for the PLAN. For example, Rosoboronexport has considered offering China about 50 Su-33 Naval Flanker-D sea-based fighter aircraft. The estimated \$2.5 billion price tag of such a deal would represent the second largest arms sales agreement in Russian history, exceeded only by the \$3-billion agreement whereby Indian companies are assembling 140 Su-MKI fighters in India under a Russian license.³⁴

Thus far, however, the Russian government has still refused to authorize the sale of many advanced weapons since Russian officials continue to calculate that the potential costs from such transactions would likely exceed the benefits Moscow might accrue from the arms sales. First, the governments of Taiwan, the United States, and possibly Japan and other countries would criticize the sales as destabilizing. By improving China’s air and maritime power projection capabilities, these Russian sales would increase the risk that Beijing policy makers might come to believe that they had a stronger military option against potential adversaries. Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, and other countries that have territorial disputes with China might hold Moscow responsible for the increased risks of war.

In addition, a substantial factor weighing against a Russian decision to transfer even more advanced military systems is that

³³–Cited in “China Intends to Buy Russia’s Su-33 Fighters.”

³⁴–“Russia Ready to Face Competition on China Arms Market – Official,” *RIA Novosti*, November 1, 2006, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20061101/55290795.html>.

Chinese engineers might learn enough from the sophisticated technology to further improve the quality of their indigenous production. Russian and other analysts cite past instances when Chinese technicians copied Russian weapons systems and, after making slight adjustments in their parameters (e.g., changing the caliber of an anti-missile system from 100 to 105 millimeters), sold them for export.³⁵ China had a long history of copying Soviet-era aircraft. China's J-6 and J-7 fighters were modeled after MiG-19 Farmer and MiG-21 Fishbed; its H-6 bomber after the Soviet Tu-16 Badger; and China's Y-5, Y-7 and Y-8 transport planes are based on the Soviet An-2 Colt, An-24 Coke and An-12 Cub, respectively.³⁶ The latest concern is that Chinese submarine designers are copying Soviet-era submarine technology, specifically incorporating insights from the Kilo-class diesel subs China purchased from Russia into the new Yuan-class submarine.³⁷

Many Russian defense experts believe that the Chinese have violated the terms of previous technology transfer contracts by illicitly using Russian intellectual property to manufacture Chinese versions of Soviet and Russian weapons and sell them on third markets. These pirated and resold systems allegedly range from Kalashnikov assault rifles to Grad and Smerch multiple-launch rocket systems to

³⁵-Chzhan Ikhun, "Russko-Kitayskogo trgovlya po oruzhiya razvivaetsya," *Vremya Novosti*, May 27, 2003. For other evidence that Chinese engineers have succeeded in copying Russian military technology for use in China's own defense industry see Alyson J. K. Bailes (ed.), *SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 423-424.

³⁶- "Chinese-Made Su-27s Will Squeeze Russia out of Third-Country Markets-Expert," *RIA Novosti*, February 21, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080221/99804804.html>.

³⁷-Andrei Chang, "Analysis: Chinese Subs in S. China Sea," *UPI*, May 9, 2008, http://www.upi.com/International_Security/Industry/Analysis/2008/05/09/analysis_chinese_subs_in_s_china_sea/9552/.

self-propelled guns and tanks to most recently advanced fighter aircraft.³⁸ A minority of Russian analysts maintain that China's defense industry lags so far behind that of Russia that, even though Chinese firms have been able to copy – and in some cases improve upon – earlier Soviet weapons systems, Russian designers have since been able to manufacture more advanced weapons systems that sustain the large capability gap between the two countries.³⁹

The Russian authorities have been careful in recent years to limit which arms they will offer to the PRC after the Chinese demonstrated great prowess in copying Soviet-era systems that the Russian government had earlier sold to Beijing. Like Western governments that frequently highlight their concerns about Chinese efforts to steal their military secrets and other valuable technologies, Russian counter-intelligence officials also worry about Chinese operations affecting their country. In December 2007, a Moscow court convicted Reshetin and the other four employers who had worked at the Tsniimash-Export company for attempting to transfer without authorization missile delivery technology to China's Precision Machinery Import-Export Corporation.⁴⁰ In October 2008, a court also convicted a Russian couple accused of attempting to sell information to Chinese military intelligence about aircraft carriers.⁴¹ In February 2009, Russia's chief

³⁸-“China Ousting Russia from Global Aviation Market,” *Nezavisimaya gazeta* cited in *RIA Novosti*, April 22, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080422/105653006.html>.

³⁹-“China Copies Obsolete Russian Fighter,” *RIA Novosti*, April 25, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080425/105928822.html>.

⁴⁰-“Reshetin Sentenced to 11.5 Years for Passing Technology to China,” *RIA Novosti*, December 3, 2007, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20071203/90747889.html>.

⁴¹-Michael Lelyveld, “China-Russia Oil Deal Masks Frictions,” *Radio Free Asia*, May 18, 2009, http://www.rfa.org/english/energy_watch/china-russia-oil-05182009150213.html.

military prosecutor Sergei Fridinsky announced that his office had begun criminal proceedings against several senior Russian navy officials and Russian businessmen suspected of attempting to ship naval weapons bought on the black market through Tajikistan to China. The office characterized the attempted transaction as involving 30 anti-submarine missiles and 200 aviation bombs, which the accused hoped to sell for \$18 million.⁴² These and related operations are usually managed in a manner to avoid a direct confrontation with Beijing. The Russian agencies typically only arrest the Russian nationals but not the Chinese citizens implicated. In turn, the Chinese government declined to comment publicly on the incident, though China's state-controlled media can publish comments by Chinese defense experts casting doubt on the allegations.

Some Russian sources now believe that Chinese companies may soon seek to mass produce and export on third-party markets a domestic copy of Russia's Su-27 Flanker fighter. In 2007, the Su-27, along with the Su-30 Flanker C, a variant of the Su-27, accounted for half the revenue of Rosoboronexport.⁴³ Since 1992, the Chinese government has purchased 76 complete Su-27SK fighters from Russia, while manufacturing another hundred of these third-generation planes under a production license purchased in 1995. The Chinese designate these domestic-made Su-27s as the "J-11." China has had to continue importing key Russian components for the indigenous Su-27/J-11 that were not included in

⁴²- "Russian Missiles Seized on way to China," *Reuters*, February 25, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Russian_Missiles_Seized_On_Way_To_China/1499230.html.

⁴³- "Chinese-Made Su-27s Will Squeeze Russia out of Third-Country Markets – Expert," *RIA Novosti*, February 21, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080221/99804804.html>.

the 1995 agreement, including the plane's avionics and AL-31F turbofan engine.⁴⁴ In 2004, however, the Chinese side informed Russia's Sukhoi aircraft company that it no longer desired to purchase the 100 additional assembly kits that had been envisaged in the 1995 contract. The professed reason was that the basic variant of the Su-27SK/J-11 fighter no longer met the Chinese Air Force's increasingly stringent performance requirements. However, Russian arms sellers believe the Chinese decided simply to take advantage of their improving domestic defense capabilities and substitute Chinese-made components for those previously imported from Russia. For example, China's new WS-10A Tai Hang turbofan engine has similar performance capabilities to the Russian AL-31F engine.⁴⁵ Since 2006, China has reportedly manufactured several prototypes of its own domestic version, the J-11B multi-function fighter. According to Chinese sources, 90 percent of the major subsystems fitted on the J-11B, including the 1474 serial radar and optical electronic systems, are manufactured in China.⁴⁶ The J-11 has been built at the Shenyang Aircraft Corporation (SAC), where the Su-27K had previously been assembled.

The expanding capabilities of the Chinese defense industry became evident in November 2006 when the Aviation Industries of China displayed a new air-launched supersonic cruise missile at the Sixth China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition held in Zhuhai. The

⁴⁴ "China Copies Su-27 Fighter, May Compete with Russia – Paper," *RIA Novosti*, February 21, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20080221/99765686.html>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Andrei Chang, "Analysis: China imitates Su-27SK," *United Press International*, February 25, 2008, http://www.upi.com/International_Security/Industry/Analysis/2008/02/25/analysis_china_imitates_su-27sk/2777.

ramjet-powered missile could allow the PLAN to attack U.S. aircraft carriers and other ships within a 400 km radius. China has until now relied on Russian imports for its anti-ship cruise missiles such as the SS-N-22 “Sunburn” and SS-N-27B “Sizzler.”⁴⁷ Russian defense firms already have confronted increasingly unwelcome Chinese competition in third- country arms markets, such as in Egypt and Myanmar. In some developing countries that previously bought predominantly Soviet arms, Russian firms have yielded much of the market to lower-cost Chinese suppliers.

According to the Iranian news agency PressTV, Iran’s leaders, annoyed at Moscow’s continued procrastination, are ready to purchase an air defense system, the HongQi-9, from China that “borrows” heavily from the S-300 technology that China purchased from Russia in the 1990s.⁴⁸ In November 2008, the China Precision Machinery Import- Export Corporation (CASIC) placed the HQ-9 surface to air missile on the export market as the “FD-2000.” The HQ-9/FD-2000 reportedly uses elements of the S-300’s solid rocket, aerodynamic layout, gas-dynamic spoilers, launch technologies, and search and guidance systems.⁴⁹ Although its reported range and effectiveness is lower than that of the most sophisticated variants of the S-300, the HQ-9/FD-2000 would still represent a major improvement over the Russian-made Tor-M1 mid-air defense systems Iran has purchased in

⁴⁷-Joseph E. Lin, “China Unveils New Supersonic Cruise Missile,” *China Brief*, Vol. 6, No. 24, December 6, 2006, p. 2.

⁴⁸-“Russia ‘Losing to China on Iran S-300 Quest,’” PressTV, May 9, 2009, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=94183>.

⁴⁹-“China Gearing up to Export HQ-9 Anti-Air Missiles,” *Defense Industry Daily*, March 8, 2009, <http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/China-Gearing-up-to-Export-HQ-9-Anti-Air-Missiles-05319/>.

the past.⁵⁰ One wonders how long the Russian leadership will continue to abstain from selling S-300s to Iran now that they risk losing the coveted Iranian arms market to China. If Chinese companies can develop more advanced indigenous weapons systems for export, China could become an even more formidable competitor.

Russian officials faced this dilemma in 2006 and 2007, when their Chinese counterparts requested that Moscow grant them a license to deliver at least 150 FC-1 Fierce Dragon fighter planes, equipped with Russian RD-93 engines, to Pakistan. Chinese and Pakistani firms are jointly developing the FC-1, which is known as the JF-17 Thunder fighter in Pakistan. Chinese manufacturers hope that foreign sales of the FC-1 (a single-engine delta-winged fighter manufactured primarily at the Chengdu Aeronautical Complex) will help transform China into a leading seller of advanced combat aircraft to developing countries, many of which currently purchase Russian military aircraft. Beijing had signed an end-user agreement that requires Russian government approval before China can re-export the RD-93 to a third country. On the one hand, refusing the Chinese re-export request would have made Beijing more reluctant to purchase Russian technology in the future. On the other hand, granting the re-export license in the case of the FC-1 would – besides antagonizing India, Russia's other leading arms purchaser – make it harder to deny similar Chinese requests to sell the planes to additional countries.⁵¹ According to the Russian media, in

⁵⁰–Andrei Chang, “China Offers HQ-9 SAM for Export,” *UPI*, March 6, 2009, http://www.upiasia.com/Security/2009/03/06/china_offers_hq-9_sam_for_export/6690/.

⁵¹–Ivan Safronov, Alexandra Gritskova, and Knstantin Lantratov, “Rossiya Vybraet mezhdru \$1.5 mlrd I \$2 mlrd,” *Kommersant*, October 30, 2006; and Mure Dickie, Farhan Bokhari, and Arkady Ostrovsky, “China Confident Russia Will Allow Jet

April 2007, Putin personally gave China permission to re-export the Russian RD-93 engines to Pakistan as a one-time arrangement. The Ministry of Defense, Rosoboronexport, and other key actors in the Russian military-industrial complex supported granting the waiver in order to ensure that China would buy the engines. Under the terms of a 2005 contract, China will pay Russian suppliers \$238 million for the purchase of 100 RD-93 engines, as well as the associated spare parts and maintenance. China considered purchasing as many as 1,000 engines if the Russian suppliers upgrade their capabilities.⁵² The Pakistani Air Force received its first two JF-17 aircrafts in December 2007.⁵³ The following month, the plane entered into mass assembly, with a plant in northwest Pakistan combining parts from China and Pakistan with the Russian engines.⁵⁴

Yet, fears about Chinese intellectual piracy reportedly led the Russian government to decide against providing the Su-33 combat aircraft for use on possible Chinese aircraft carriers. According to the Russian press, fears that the Chinese would buy a few systems in order to reverse engineer or otherwise copy them led to a collapse of the Russian-Chinese negotiations regarding a possible deal.⁵⁵ The Chinese reportedly asked to purchase only two Su-33 planes for a “trial” before

Sale,” *Financial Times*, November 9, 2006.

⁵²- Leksandra Greitsova and Elena Kiseleva, “Kitayskiye istrebiteli doletyat do Pakistana” [Chinese Fighter Jets to Reach Pakistan], *Kommersant*, April 26, 2007.

⁵³- “Co-Production of Pak-China Thunder Jet JF-17 Begins in Pakistan,” *RTI News*, January 22, 2008, www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1957516/posts.

⁵⁴- “Pakistan Starts Mass Production of JF-17 Fighters – National TV,” *RIA Novosti*, January 22, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20080122/97523937.html>.

⁵⁵- “Russia Shows Concern over Chinese Weapons Piracy,” *RIA Novosti*, March 13, 2009, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20090313/120554173.html>.

considering whether to buy merely a dozen more.⁵⁶ Russian defense industry representatives calculated they needed to manufacture at least 24 planes to recover their fixed production costs.⁵⁷ Observers speculate that one reason Russia decided in October 2007 to jointly develop and produce a fifth-generation combat aircraft with India rather than China was fears that China might misappropriate Russian intellectual property.⁵⁸ At the 13th session of the Russian-Chinese Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation, which met in Beijing from December 9-11, 2008, the two governments announced that they had agreed to negotiate a new bilateral intellectual property agreement, but whether it will work sufficiently well to assuage Russian concerns about Chinese piracy remains to be seen.⁵⁹

An even more worrisome possibility would be China's employment of Russian defense technologies in a future war with Taiwan, India, the United States, or even Russia itself. Since 1993, Russia has provided China with 20 battalions of surface to air missiles, including S-300 SAMs, S-300PMUs, S-300PMU1s, and most recently S-300PMU2s. These systems have become an essential component of China's air defense network, including in possible cross-Strait operations against Taiwan and its American military allies.⁶⁰ Some Russian strategists

⁵⁶- "Russian-Chinese Su-33 Fighter Deal Collapse," *RIA Novosti*, March 10, 2009, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090310/120493194.html>.

⁵⁷- "Do It Yourself: Russia Blocks China's Copycat Efforts," *Russia Today*, March 9, 2009, http://www.russiatoday.ru/Top_News/2009-03-09/Do_it_yourself__Russia_blocks__China_s_copycat_efforts.html.

⁵⁸- Paul Holtom, "Outside View: Russia-China Row – Part 2," *United Press International*, April 9, 2008, http://www.upi.com/International_Security/Industry/Analysis/2008/04/09/outside_view_russia-china_row_--_part_2/7841.

⁵⁹- Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations: Embracing a Storm."

⁶⁰- Andrei Chang, "Analysis: China to Get SAMs from Russia," *United Press International*,

anticipate that China's peaceful acquisition or military conquest of Taiwan would allow Beijing to redirect any expansionist ambitions against Russia's Central Asian allies or the under-populated Russian Far East.⁶¹ Although a possible Sino-Russian military conflict presently seems remote, some of the weapons systems China is acquiring from Russia could remain operational for decades. During the Sino-Soviet border clashes of the late 1960s, the Chinese forces employed Soviet-supplied weapons against their Soviet units. Although the predominant sentiment among Russian defense experts is that China is either a potential military ally of Russia or will lack the ability to rival the Russian armed forces for the indefinite future, a few Russian military experts worry that Beijing might again present "a major threat" to Russia.⁶² Former Russian General and Yeltsin's National Security Adviser Aleksandr Lebed once remarked that, "our brilliant minds in the military are selling them aircraft. These aircrafts will one day bring bombs to our heads."⁶³

Finally, China's high demand for Russian arms from other countries as well as Russia's own defense ministry has reduced the need for Moscow to take risks in selling more powerful weapons to China. Although some Russian manufacturers still rely heavily on Chinese defense contracts,

May 2, 2008, http://www.upi.com/International_Security/Industry/Analysis/2008/05/02/analysis_china_to_get_sams_from_russia/1514.

⁶¹-Yury E. Fedorov, *'Boffins' and 'Buffoons': Different Strains of Thought in Russia's Strategic Thinking* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, March 2006), p. 3, <http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/BP0306russia.pdf>.

⁶²-Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Threat Perception and Strategic Posture" in *Russian Security Strategy under Putin: U.S. and Russian Perspectives* (Carlyle: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007), p. 47.

⁶³-Herman Pirchner, Jr. "The Uncertain Future: Sino-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century," *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 16, No 4 (Fall 2008), p. 313.

many others have received orders from other countries. In recent years, Russia's annual arms sales have increased by about \$800 million annually despite the reduction in Chinese purchases. The Russian government and its defense companies have negotiated major arms sales deals with Algeria, India, Indonesia, Venezuela, and other countries. Rosobornexport claims to have already signed some \$26.5 billion worth of contracts that it can fulfill in coming years, a much larger backlog than during the 1990s and early 2000s when sales to China were seen as essential for sustaining Russia's ailing defense industry.⁶⁴ In February 2009, Isaikin professed unconcern about the declining share of Russian military sales to China since Rosobornexport's sales volumes to the rest of the world were growing. Isaikin added that China would likely continue to buy some Russian weapons systems while working with Russia to co-develop high-technology dual-use products having both civilian and military application.⁶⁵ The owners of the large numbers of weapons systems that China has acquired from Russia during the past decade and a half will presumably also need to purchase spare parts and upgrades for these systems.

The favorable situation might change yet again. Although Russian arms sales remain healthy, the global recession could lead foreign governments to reduce their purchases of Russian weapons in the future. The recent decline in world prices for Russia's oil and gas exports has already sharply decreased the Russian government's energy export

⁶⁴-Vadim Soloviev, "'Rosoboroneksport' ukreplyaet pozitsii," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, February 6, 2009, http://nvo.ng.ru/armament/2009-02-06/1_Rosoboroneksport.html.

⁶⁵- *Ibid.*

revenue and induced Russian negotiators to make additional concessions to secure Chinese purchases of additional Russian energy supplies. The Russian military might need to scale back its own weapons purchases. These conditions could at some point induce Russian officials to acquiesce in the sale of more advanced weapons systems to China despite the associated risks. If this occurs, then the PRC is likely to consolidate its position as North Korea's main weapons supplier, further weakening Russian influence in Pyongyang.

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Building a Security Community in Northeast Asia: Options and Challenges

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Abstract

Northeast Asia remains fraught with numerous security challenges. Not only is it where two of the world's Nuclear Weapons States (Russia and China) are found, territorial and maritime disputes between Northeast Asian states also abound. However, it is the division of the Korean peninsula into two states (the North and the South) along with the denuclearization of the peninsula that are most cumbersome. This essay examines the challenges and prospects of creating a security community in Northeast Asia in the context of the current security challenges. The Deutschian concept of security community is used in this essay to provide a starting point to develop a security community in the region. The essay argues that the presence or availability of a multilateral security dialogue mechanism is the key step in facilitating the creation of a security community in Northeast Asia. This security community is attained when the Northeast Asian states would no longer be expecting or preparing to use military force in dealing with each other or when there is real assurance that they would rather settle their disputes in another way rather than fighting.

Key Words: security community, denuclearization, Korean peninsula, security dialogue mechanism, six-party talks

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Introduction

Northeast Asia has diverse security challenges.¹ The region is where two of the established Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) of Russia and China are located and it is also where the last vestiges of the Cold War remain. The Korean peninsula remains divided despite the end of the Cold War almost two decades ago.

The sub-region waits to see how the relationship between North Korea and South Korea will evolve and conclude. In addition, it is also confronted with the issue of how China and Taiwan will eventually relate to each other. Alongside these political divisions are the historical issues of how Northeast Asian states will deal with Tokyo in regard to their past experience with Imperial Japan. Northeast Asian countries have yet to resolve historical antagonisms. Past visits to the Yasukuni Shrine dedicated to the soldiers who have fought for the Japanese emperor by past Japanese Prime Ministers have triggered contempt and disdain from South Korea and China whose citizens were among the victims of Japanese atrocities.

Other disagreements in Northeast Asia include the territorial and maritime disputes between Northeast Asian states. Japan is in conflict over the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands, Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and the Northern Territories with South Korea, China, and Russia respectively. China further finds itself embroiled in a territorial dispute over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea with five other claimants that include Taiwan. Meanwhile in the Korean peninsula, there is conflict over the

¹-Kadir Ayhan, *Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism from South Korea's Perspective*, 2008 [PDF document], http://www.bilgesam.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=129:northeast-asia-peace-and-security-mechanism-from-south-koreas-perspective&catid=92:analizler-uzakdogu&Itemid=137.

Northern Limit Line on the Yellow/West Sea.²

Northeast Asia is a very diverse region. Contending political systems has also been adopted and has further contributed to the regional diversity such as the strange hybrid that are capitalism and socialism.³ The prevailing disparate conditions have been exacerbated by increased military spending among countries in the region amid an overall decline in global military spending. In the 1990s, “Japan’s real military spending jumped by 20 percent, South Korea’s by 25 percent, and Taiwan’s by 80 percent, while North Korea’s by 11 percent. [Except for North Korea], these states’ spending may be in line with the economic growth they have been experiencing [although the figures are] quite [high] especially in light of the general decline in world military expenditures since the end of the Cold War.”⁴

Given the “fundamentally distrustful, conflict-ridden, and power and interest-centric” situation in Northeast Asia,⁵ the development of a security community among Northeast Asian states including the U.S. would be a most welcome development. Yet, creating such sense of security community among the states in Northeast Asia would be difficult

²- See Samuel S. Kim, “North Korea and Northeast Asia in World Politics” in Samuel S. Kim and Tai Hwan Lee (eds.), *North Korea and Northeast Asia* (England: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2002), pp. 3-58.

³- Shi Yuanhua, *A Brief Analysis of the Security Environment of Northeast Asia*, <http://www.peacedepot.org/theme/toyota/Shi%20Yuanhua.htm>.

⁴- Hun Park, “Paradigms and Fallacies: Rethinking Northeast Asian Security and Its Implications for Korea” (Prepared for Delivery at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 2006) [PDF document], http://www.all-academic.com/one/apsa/apsa06/index.php?cmd=apsa06_search&offset=0&limit=5&multi_search_search_mode=publication&multi_search_publication_fulltext_mod=fulltext&textfield_submit=true&search_module=multi_search&search=Search&search_field=title_idx&fulltext_search=Paradigms+and+Fallacies%3A+Rethinking+Northeast+Asian+Security+and+Its+Implications+for+Korea.

⁵- *Ibid.*

given the issues outlined above. Of note is that the foremost concerns in Northeast Asia (at least in the near future) are the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and relatedly the reunification of the two Koreas. It is in this context that this essay focuses on the issue of the denuclearization of the peninsula and the related issue of the North and South division of Korea.

This essay examines the challenges and prospects of creating a security community in Northeast Asia. The essay utilizes the Deutschan concept of a security community as the beginning for a new theoretical exposition on the security community and reviews how such an idea has evolved. It argues several directions toward developing a sense of security community in the Northeast Asian region and highlights both the attendant challenges as well as the prospects in fostering a security community. The argument that the presence or availability of a multilateral security dialogue mechanism is emphasized as the first step toward the creation of a security community in Northeast Asia.

Conceptualizing “Security Community”

The idea of a ‘security community’ goes above and beyond being merely a military alliance, where each state in that alliance can rest assured that its allies will come to its aid when attacked by a common or perceived threat. The preparation for war and declaration of war by allies is an option that is used to deal with external threats to the group. A security community compels members not to prepare for war against each other; in addition, the members of a community come together

and espouse a “peaceful change” in resolving common social problems. Instead of the usual employment of large-scale physical forces and violence, institutionalized procedures take the place of war as a means to resolve interstate conflict.⁶ A “sense of community” is also adopted wherein states have “mutual sympathy and loyalties; of ‘we-feeling,’ trust, and mutual consideration; [and] of partial identification in terms of self-images and interests.”⁷ It is then believed that a “sense of community” and “peaceful change” results in the absence of interstate war or even the decrease of its likelihood in a particular region.⁸

Deutsch et. al. are credited for the illustration of how security communities are formed, arguing that security communities come in two types: (1) amalgamated and (2) pluralistic.⁹ Amalgamated security communities, such as the U.S., are created when a common government is formed by two or more previously independent political units while pluralistic security communities have as members formally independent states.¹⁰ While pluralistic security community members retain the distinction as individual sovereign states, “members share the same identity, values and intentions.”¹¹ Furthermore, the “members enjoy many direct contacts and interactions between each other; and such a community shows some reciprocity that is produced in face-to-face

⁶-Karl W. Deutsch, *Security Communities, International Politics and Foreign Policy* (NY: New York Free Press, 1961), p. 98.

⁷-Andrej Tuscisny, “Security Communities and Their Values: Taking Masses Seriously,” *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2007) [PDF document], p. 429.

⁸-*Ibid.*, p. 426.

⁹-*Ibid.*

¹⁰-*Ibid.*

¹¹-Wang Jiangli, “Security Community” in the context of non-traditional security [PDF document], <http://www.rsis-ntsasia.org/activities/fellowship/2007/wjl's%20paper.pdf>.

contacts and manifested through somewhat long-term benefits and altruism.”¹²

Deutsch advances two fundamental conditions that may facilitate the formation of a security community. First, participating political units or governments must have, “the capacity... to respond to each other’s needs, messages and actions quickly, adequately, and without resort to violence,” which is fostered through membership in “international organizations that favors mutual communication and consultation.”¹³ The utility of international organizations is that they encourage interaction between states, discover new areas of mutual interest, shape norms of state behavior, and construct a common identity with shared values among the states involved.¹⁴ All of these serve as viable alternatives to war.

Second is the compatibility of political decision-making such as political ideology.¹⁵ As Adler and Barnett stress, “a security community has ‘shared identities, values and meanings.’”¹⁶ Australia may serve as an example as it is considered part of the Western security community.

Values that states could share have to be identified and based on the “importance on the domestic politics of the participating units.”¹⁷ Although a practical consideration, geographic proximity is not neces-

¹² - *Ibid.*

¹³ - Andrej Tuscisny, “Security Communities and Their Values: Taking Masses Seriously,” *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2007) [PDF document], <http://ips.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/28/4/425>, pp. 426, 428.

¹⁴ - Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities* as cited in Tuscisny, “Security Communities and Their Values: Taking Masses Seriously,” p. 428.

¹⁵ - See Tuscisny, “Security Communities and Their Values: Taking Masses Seriously.”

¹⁶ - *Op cit.*

¹⁷ - *Ibid.*

sarily a prerequisite of security community building. A state may consider itself belonging to a security community as long as the two conditions previously discussed are present.

It is important to remember that “Deutsch et al. did not consider the compatibility of values to be necessary for the creation of security communities.”¹⁸ Until there is an absence of mutual needs and mutual concessions, “even a high degree of similarity in institutions and of likemindedness in outlooks would not produce any particular progress toward either integration or amalgamation.”¹⁹ It seems that “the crucial issue leading to the emergence of a pluralistic security community is not cultural similarity [but] ‘the increasing unattractiveness and improbability of war among the political units concerned.’”²⁰

A security community results when, “there is real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way.”²¹ Rosemary Foot suggests that a security community is composed of “states that do not expect or prepare for the use of military force in their relations with each other.”²² However, the improbability of interstate wars in recent years does not automatically mean that a security community has emerged. As long as

¹⁸ - *Ibid.*

¹⁹ - *Ibid.*

²⁰ - *Ibid.*

²¹ - Deutsch, K. et. al. (1957), “Political Community and the North Atlantic Area” as cited in Joseph M. Grieco, “Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism” in David A. Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 139.

²² - Rosemary Foot, “Pacific Asia: The Development of Pacific Dialogue” in Lousie Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 233.

“large-scale violence is still seen as a possible means of regime change, national liberation, or oppression of political opponents,” any region adopting the security community framework may face difficulties.²³

Amitav Acharya adds another dimension to understanding the concept of a security community. For Acharya, “the core concept of a security community views international relationships as a course of learning from each other and forming a common identity driven by bargaining, interaction and socialization, [thus], international relationships can be re-conceptualized as ‘a world society of a political community, including social groups, the course of political communications, compulsory measures, and the submission to the most popular practices.’”²⁴ The concept of security community is no longer exclusive to the realm of military affairs and hard politics. Wang Jiangli states, “researches about security communities have extended from NATO to other regions in the West, and then to the regions outside the West in terms of ranges; and as with security goals and contents, they have been spread from to simple military security or political security to the fields of economy, trade, and even to the peaceful transformation in the international community.”²⁵ In addition, non-traditional security concerns have gradually been brought within the ambit of the discourse on security community.

The concept of security community (while originally within the purview of the discourse on integration) has evolved. From being based on a military alliance, to an emphasis on peaceful change and sense of

²³- Tuscisny, “Security Communities and Their Values: Taking Masses Seriously,” p. 427.

²⁴- See Amitav Acharya A., *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (London: Routledge, 2001).

²⁵- Wang Jiangli, “Security Community” in the context of non-traditional security [PDF document], <http://www.rsis-ntsasia.org/activities/fellowship/2007/wjl's%20paper.pdf>.

community, until the most recent adoption of non-traditional security matters within the sphere of the security community discourse.

The Troubled Region of the Korean Peninsula

The most difficult challenge confronting Northeast Asia outlined in the introductory section of this essay is the division of the Korean peninsula into two states. This division dates back to 1945 after the Second World War, when the Soviet Union and the U.S. came to an agreement to divide the peninsula temporarily along the 38th parallel. The Soviet Union took charge of the Northern part and the U.S. administered the Southern portion. Three years later, the two Koreas established their respective governments with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DRPK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) becoming the official names of North Korea and South Korea respectively in August and September of 1948. Both Koreas wanted to reunify the peninsula based on their respective system of government, a war resulted in 1950 when the DPRK with a superior military and the tacit support of the Soviet Union and China moved into the demarcation line and attacked the South, which eventually came to be defended by the U.S. and other allied countries. While a truce eventually came to be forged through what is now known as the Armistice Agreement of 1953, the conflict never ended.²⁶

With the support of the U.S. and Japan, South Korea managed to

²⁶-See Wayne Kirkbride, *North Korea's Undeclared War: 1953* (New Jersey: Hollym International Corporation, 1994).

rebuild its economy with increased production and exports that dramatically improved working and living conditions. On the other hand, North Korea has stagnated to remain in relative isolation and refused to associate itself with the economic reforms of either China or the Soviet Union.²⁷ South Korea is known for economic prosperity, while North Korea is associated with famine and nuclear weapons.

The North Korean economy is in shambles. When the Soviet Union started to collapse in the late 1980s, the North Korean economy went into a steep decline, culminating in one of the worst famines of the 20th century. As many as one million people (or 5 percent of the population) perished in the mid-1990s because of the famine.²⁸ Worse, the adoption of a military-first politics by the North Korean regime resulted in allocating resources in favor of the military amid growing economic difficulties for the rest of the population.

North Korea is now known for its nuclear weapons program, although its nuclear program was initially undertaken in the 1970s in order to make the country's energy self-reliant given the oil crisis at that time. There is another reason why the DPRK has been fixated in pursuing nuclear weapons development out of the nuclear program; North Korea believes that nuclear weapons are the only effective means of deterring an attack from the U.S.²⁹

²⁷- See "North Korea," *World Factbook*, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kn.html#econ>.

²⁸- Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "A Security and Peace Mechanism for Northeast Asia: The Economic Dimension," Peterson Institute for International Economics Policy Brief No. PB08-4 (April 2008), <http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/08030HaggardNoland.pdf>.

²⁹- Benjamin Friedman, "Fact Sheet: North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," Center for Defense Information, <http://www.cdi.org/nuclear/nk-fact-sheet.cfm>.

In the 1970s, North Korea established a civilian 5-megawatt reactor in Yongbyon and placed it under the supervision and monitoring of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as an apparent assurance that it would not be utilized for weapons development. However, the North soon started constructing another reactor that could be utilized for weapons production. Pyongyang was prodded to become a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985, the agreement binds signatories to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and guarantees that those countries that pursue nuclear programs for peaceful civilian use will be assisted by those with nuclear technology and material.

There have been occasions when North Korea did not provide IAEA inspectors access to nuclear facilities or rejected inspections despite North Korea having signed agreements with the IAEA to ensure that it complies with safeguards and safety standards, as well as assure the international community that it would allow inspectors from the IAEA to monitor nuclear activities. The Agreed Framework between North Korea and the U.S. was signed after the death of Kim Il Sung in 1994 and the transfer of power to Kim Jong-il. With this framework, Washington would provide Pyongyang with new reactors and fuel in exchange for North Korea agreeing not to withdraw from signed treaties and agreements.³⁰ The Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was formed to provide energy alternatives for North Korea. However, North Korea continued to test ballistic missiles. To complicate the issue, Pyongyang admitted in 2002 to a “clandestine program to enrich uranium

³⁰-Daniel B. Poneman, Joel S. Wit and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2004), p. 4.

for nuclear weapons.”³¹

Pyongyang declared that it would “restart plutonium production” and “eject the IAEA inspectors” after the U.S. terminated the Agreed Framework of 1994 and suspended oil shipments to North Korea.³² In 2003, the DPRK withdrew from the NPT and informed the world of a nuclear weapons and a delivery system; in addition to ability to demonstrate the capability of the weapons system.

The North Korean nuclear weapons development program places constant attention on Northeast Asia and compounds the issue of a divided Korea. This attention is the result of the “hard-line” stance North Korea has with regard to its nuclear weapons program and how it relates with South Korea and a U.S. foreign policy that is involved in issues related to the sub-region.

The stability of the sub-region rests on the fragility of North Korean efforts to become a nuclear power. Regional insecurity is exacerbated by the incessant build-up of the nuclear arsenal of Pyongyang. Reports about its newly changed constitution assert a “military-first” stance, which means that North Korea still believes that “economic recovery is more likely if the country maintains its nuclear arsenal rather than cashing it in for economic assistance and integration into the global economy.”³³ North Korea can only focus on economic recovery after it is secured militarily.³⁴

Compounding the economic difficulties of North Korea and

³¹–“Nuclear Weapons Program,” <http://fas.org/nuke/guide/dprk/nuke/>

³²–Friedman, “Fact Sheet: North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program.”

³³–International Crisis Group, *North Korea: Getting Back to Talks*, 2009, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6163&l=1>; and Jill McGivering, “North Korea constitution bolsters Kim,” *BBC News*, September 29, 2009, <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8279830.stm?ad=1>.

³⁴–*Ibid.*

concerns over its nuclear weapons program is the uncertainty of the current regime retaining power. Observers note that Kim Jong-il's failing health and eventual succession, "could unleash instability, or it could result in a much more belligerent or isolated military regime. The transfer of power after Kim Jong-il is far less clear than when his father died in 1994."³⁵ The indicators of an impending succession have become manifested as Pyongyang is seen to have taken a hard-line stance.³⁶ It is reported that Kim Jong-il has appointed his son Kim Jong-un as successor. Some observers speculate that "the recent nuclear test and the April 5 attempted satellite launch are being attributed to Kim Jong-un [and] elements of the state apparatus are being mobilized to upgrade his credentials."³⁷

The Prospects of Security Community Building in Northeast Asia

It is easy for some observers to dismiss the idea of creating a sense of security community in the sub-region in regard to the Northeast Asian situation. Creating such a security community may be difficult, but not impossible. The first key step would be the establishment of a multilateral security dialogue mechanism underpinned by good bilateral relations among the Northeast Asian states, including the U.S., which while geographically not a part of the sub-region is a de facto politically part of the sub-region given its political and military

³⁵ - *Ibid.*

³⁶ - *Ibid.*

³⁷ - *Ibid.*

involvement in regional issues and affairs.

A positive development is that cooperation (particularly in regard to the economy) among the Northeast Asian states has been taking place. Japan and China became each other's largest trading partners even overtaking the U.S. South Korean exports and investment capital have China as the biggest market with total bilateral trade amounting to \$168.3 billion (of which \$91.4 billion are exports).³⁸ At the end of 2008, cumulative total of South Korean investments in China amounted to \$37.6 billion.³⁹ These states have also begun to promote cooperation among their central banks and finance ministries through the 2001 Chiang Mai Agreement.⁴⁰

Cultural cooperation has also been fostered through exchange programs, specifically student exchanges between Japan, South Korea, and China. In 2002, Japan and South Korea co-hosted the Soccer World Cup and even agreed to declare 2002 as "The Year of Japan-ROK National Exchange."⁴¹ In the same year, the Japan-Korea Cultural Exchange Council was also founded "to discuss plans to enhance cultural and artistic exchange between the two countries."⁴² During the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Agreement in 1999, the Takarazuka Revue Company performed in Beijing and Shanghai while the Chinese Film Week took place in

³⁸ - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Republic of Korea, http://www.mofat.go.kr/english/regions/asia/20070730/1_275.jsp?

³⁹ - *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ - See Park, "Paradigms and Fallacies: Rethinking Northeast Asian Security and Its Implications for Korea."

⁴¹ - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan-Republic of Korea relations," <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/korea/index.html>.

⁴² - *Ibid.*

Tokyo.⁴³ These developments manifest a growing cooperation by states in the region that go beyond economic relations.

In the area of political relations that address issues pertaining to the Korean peninsula, the key states have previously demonstrated the possibility of sitting together in a political dialogue. Although the Six-Party Talks may have failed to produce the results most observers wanted and expected, the dialogue manifests the possibility of bringing the six parties together. What originally started as tripartite talks among North Korea, the U.S., and China initially focused on negotiating a potential solution to the regional nuclear crisis, the talks have evolved to espouse the resolution of other regional issues such as territorial and maritime disputes and possibly the unification of the Korean peninsula.⁴⁴

Creating a security community within Northeast Asia has to proceed through a confluence of bilateral and multilateral efforts. The bilateral relationship between the various states in Northeast Asia could serve as the foundation for developing a security community in the region. The bilateral relationship needs to be complemented by a multilateral security dialogue mechanism as the key step toward the creation of a sense of security community among the Northeast Asian states that includes the U.S.

Other sub-regional bodies such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) could provide a set

⁴³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan-China relations," <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/index.html>.

⁴⁴ Koen De Ceuster and Jan Melissen, *Ending the North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Six Parties, Six Perspectives* (The Hague, The Netherlands: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'), http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2008/20081022_cdsp_korean_nuclear_crisis.pdf.

of practices that could contribute to security community building in Northeast Asia. Although the security environment in the Northeast Asian sub-region is different from that of Southeast Asia or Europe, ASEAN and the EU could provide a model or a set of best practices that could serve as the takeoff point for Northeast Asia.

The creation of a security community in Northeast Asia could be undertaken through what other scholars have deemed concentric circles of interaction.⁴⁵ At the innermost circle are the bilateral relations between the Northeast Asian states. Next to this circle is the multilateral interaction among the parties to the Six-Party Talks. Beyond this circle is the multilateral relationship of the Northeast Asian states through regional institutions in the Asia-Pacific region. Being concentric circles, these modes of interaction among the Northeast Asian states are not exclusive of each other but often overlap.

Bilateralism Being the Foundation of Security Community Building

A security community, almost by default, is founded on the principle of multilateralism, for a community presupposes the involvement of several actors. However, a good bilateral relationship between any two prospective members of a community provides a positive start. Bilateral relations could serve as the foundation for a stable multilateral relationship in the future in consideration of the unique circumstances

⁴⁵ The concept of “concentric circles” is borrowed from Carolina G. Hernandez, “ASEAN Post-Cold War Security Strategy for the Asia-Pacific,” *Kasarinlan*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (First Quarter 1995), pp. 63-66.

underpinning the relationship of any two states in the Northeast Asian region.

Bilateralism refers to a principle for coordinating relations between two states based on the “belief that state behavior is best carried out through one-on-one relationships.”⁴⁶ Given the security interests of states, their capabilities and the context within which they operate, they see that dyadic relationships will be the most effective. It is important to note the exclusionary character of bilateral relationships. States separate their relationship with another actor such that State A would prefer to sustain *State A-State B* and *State A-State C* relationship rather than to form a *State A-State B-State C* arrangement.

It is ironic that the bilateral relationship of the U.S. (which as previously pointed out is politically part of Northeast Asia although not within the geographic footprint of the region) with Northeast Asian states seems to be in a good state; with the exception of North Korea whose bilateral relationship with the U.S. has been strained more than ever.

The bilateral relations between the U.S. and Japan as well as between the U.S. and South Korea have been generally stable, particularly because Japan and South Korea are military allies of the U.S. As the Japanese Ambassador to ASEAN Yoshinori Katori stated, “the bilateral security alliance that the U.S. maintains with Japan is the foundation of Japanese and American relations.”⁴⁷ While multilateral security dialogue is welcome

⁴⁶- This discussion is based the conceptualization of bilateralism by Brian L. Job in his “Multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific Region.” Paper presented at the 4th Workshop on the Bilateral System of Alliances in the Changing Environment of the Asia-Pacific, Tokyo, Japan, June 10-12, 1996.

⁴⁷- Dialogue between the author and Ambassador Yoshinori Katori, Japanese Ambassador to ASEAN held at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines on October 22, 2009.

given the transnational character of security challenges facing the region, Japan still puts prime value on the security alliance with the U.S.⁴⁸ Of course, as in any bilateral relationship, problems have been encountered but generally, the bilateral relations are in good shape.

The prospects of a U.S.-China partnership are also positive. A once confrontational and adversarial U.S.-China bilateral relationship has apparently improved particularly after September 11, 2001.⁴⁹ Recently, the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Russia is also positive. The agreement between U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to further reduce their nuclear warheads is considered a manifestation of the relatively stable relationship of the two powers.

However, there remains territorial issues such as the dispute over The Liancourt Rocks between South Korea and Japan and over seabed resource extraction (e.g. the Chinese-Japanese disagreements over Chunxiao and other gas and oil fields in the East China Sea).⁵⁰ Moreover, they have not also been able to address historical antagonisms. When the Japanese government approved history textbooks that disregarded Japanese war crimes, South Koreans and the Chinese were dismayed and protested

⁴⁸ - *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ - Eric A. Mcvadon, "Northeast Asian Security: A New Paradigm," *China Brief*, Vol. 8, Issue No. 16 (2008), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=5100](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=5100).

⁵⁰ - In February 2005, for instance, the Japanese Ambassador to South Korea while in Seoul publicly claimed Dokdo as part of Japan's territory, calling it Takeshima. In March 2005, Shimane prefecture on Japan's west coast adopted an ordinance designating February 22 as "Takeshima Day" to mark the date in 1905 when Japan first claimed the islets in the midst of Japan's usurpation of Korean sovereignty. The claim and the ordinance infuriated South Koreans, and the South Korean government fulminated that the acts were tantamount to an invasion. See Mcvadon, "Northeast Asian Security: A New Paradigm."

arguing that this simply manifests the attempt by Japan to let the younger generation forget about the atrocities of Japan during World War II.⁵¹

It is also disturbing that a third state could see robust bilateral relations between two states as a threat to national security thereby straining an already brittle security environment in Northeast Asia. A clear example would be how China considers national security threatened by a renewed U.S.-Japan alliance, especially with regard to the Taiwan issue.⁵² Suspicion also lingers as to the possibility of Japan's old militarism re-emerging as Tokyo becomes more active in joining the U.S. global war on terrorism.⁵³ As Hun Joo Park notes,

Historically-embedded tensions, rivalries and nationalist passions would rise further in Northeast Asia especially if the United States as the only superpower is viewed as encouraging Japanese militarization in the process of enforcing its increasingly unilateral foreign policies.⁵⁴

The most problematic bilateral relationship is between that of the U.S. and North Korea. Washington's bilateral dealings with Pyongyang have deteriorated despite the seeming progress in the bilateral relationship of the U.S. and the other Northeast Asian states. The U.S., for example, demands that North Korea end its nuclear weapons program equating this with the thrust of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. An impasse has resulted because North Korea argues that the

⁵¹-See Park, "Paradigms and Fallacies: Rethinking Northeast Asian Security and Its Implications for Korea."

⁵²- *Ibid.*

⁵³- *Ibid.*

⁵⁴- *Ibid.*

U.S. should remove nuclear weapons directly aimed at North Korea claiming this as the first step toward the denuclearization of the peninsula.

The bilateral dyads have been developing at different rates and have not led to sub-regional confidence-building measures.⁵⁵ This shows that while bilateral relations among the Northeast Asian states may have helped in improving the security situation, they are not enough. They need to be integrated into a wider multilateral set-up.⁵⁶

Going Multilateral

Bilateralism is not enough, even though it is considered as the foundation for creating a security community. While good bilateral relations may pave the way for the creation of a security community in the region, the difficulties in the bilateral relations between Northeast Asian states still necessitate moving on the multilateral track. This of course rests on the assumption that bilateral problems will not totally obstruct multilateral cooperation on the one hand and that multilateralism would at the minimum induce the parties involved to set their respective set of bilateral problems on the sidelines in the meantime. As Romberg points out, “none of the interstate relations exist in isolation from each other and [thus] ‘properly weaving them together greatly enhances the prospects of peace.’”⁵⁷

Multilateralism could be seen in a nominal or substantive way. Nominally, multilateralism simply refers to any arrangement involving

⁵⁵- Akiko Fukushima, “Multilateral Confidence-Building Measures in Northeast Asia: Receding or Emerging?” <http://www.stimson.org/japan/pdf/fukushima.pdf>.

⁵⁶- *Ibid.*

⁵⁷- Alan D. Romberg, “Rethinking Northeast Asia,” 2008 [PDF document], http://www.stimson.org/Presidential_Inbox_2009/ARomberg_Inbox_FINAL.pdf.

three or more parties.⁵⁸ Substantively, multilateralism involves the “multiplication of channels of dialogue on ... issues at both governmental and non-governmental levels.”⁵⁹ Multilateralism can also be conceived as a “belief that activities ought to be organized on a universal basis” at least for the group concerned.⁶⁰ On a more substantive level, multilateralism is “an institutional form which coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct: that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence.”⁶¹

The first step toward multilateralism is the revival of the Six-Party Talks. It is the closest to a multilateral security dialogue mechanism the region has had. Its revival is believed to jump-start the creation of a dialogue mechanism that could contribute toward the creation of a security community in the Northeast Asian region. The Joint Statement on the proposed Northeast Asian Security Mechanism was a result of the Fourth Round of the talks on September 19, 2005.⁶² The Joint

⁵⁸-Anne-Marie Burley, “Regulating the World: Multilateralism, International Law, and the Projection of the New Deal Regulatory State” in Helen Milner and John Gerard Ruggie (eds.), *Multilateralism Matters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 126-127.

⁵⁹-See Jing-dong Yuan, *Conditional Multilateralism: Chinese Views on Order and Regional Security* (Center for International and Security Studies, York University, 1996), p. 1.

⁶⁰-James A. Caporaso, “International Relations Theory and Multilateralism: The Search for Foundations” in Helen Milner and John Gerard Ruggie (eds.), *Multilateralism Matters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 55.

⁶¹-John Gerard Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution” in Helen Milner and John Gerard Ruggie (eds.), *Multilateralism Matters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 11.

⁶²-See Ayhan, K., *Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism from South Korea’s Perspective*, 2008.

Statement's Fourth Article specifically states that the parties are committed to seek "ways and means for promoting security cooperation in Northeast Asia" for "lasting peace and stability" of the region.⁶³ In addition, two years after the statement was issued (on February 13, 2007), and the first tangible action toward the goal of having a security mechanism was realized with the establishment of the Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism Working Group.⁶⁴ Prospects have also increased since North Koreans have expressed the intent to rejoin the talks after declaring that the negotiations were finished in April 2009.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, this would still be dependent on bilateral talks with the U.S.⁶⁶

The seeming presence of support both from within and outside the region is important to note. China has espoused a multilateral approach in regard to promoting regional security.⁶⁷ This is a stark contrast to the policy of adopting a bilateral approach in dealing with the disputes in the South China Sea. It has actually been consistent in expressing hope that "North Korea will adopt a responsible attitude ... and come back to resolving the issue through dialogue and consultation instead of taking any actions that may further escalate or worsen the situation."⁶⁸ China is perceived as the only Northeast Asian state to exercise influence over North Korea and has actually been prodded

⁶³ - *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ - *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ - "North Korea may return to talks," *BBC Online*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8291882.stm>.

⁶⁶ - *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ - Pang Zhongying, "Beijing seeks multilateral Northeast Asian security," *Asia Times Online*, April 9, 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/FD09Ad03.html>.

⁶⁸ - Mcvadon, "Northeast Asian Security: A New Paradigm."

to exercise its influence in getting Pyongyang show more substantive support for the talks. Russia, Japan, South Korea, and the U.S. have urged North Korea to accommodate the Six-Party Talks.⁶⁹ Outside, Australia has proactively asked for a more Northeast Asian-orientated regional security forum.⁷⁰

One major constraint of the Six-Party Talks in serving as the platform for creating a security community in the region is the apparent tendency of the forum to overlook the necessity of establishing a peace regime through the reunification of the Korean peninsula. This is created by the fact that the focus of the talks is actually to discourage or prevent North Korea from furthering its ambition to become a nuclear power.⁷¹ Secondly, while the Six-Party Talks could serve as a start for a security mechanism in the region, it may confine the parties involved in merely dealing with non-proliferation issues, making it the sole agenda of the talks in utter disregard of the other equally important issues in the region. Ironically, while preventing North Korea from furthering its nuclear weapons program is the main thrust of the Six-Party Talks, the talks have not been effective in convincing North Korea to forego its nuclear program. This is because Pyongyang believes that nuclear weapons are “the only thing that can provide it with some semblance of deterrence against the military might of the world’s only superpower [The U.S.]”⁷²

⁶⁹- Gennady Chufirin, “The North Korean Nuclear Crisis,” 2005, <http://northkorea.ssrc.org/Chufirin/>.

⁷⁰- Australia calls for Northeast Asian security, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/ra/programguide/stories/200804/s2205827.htm>.

⁷¹- R. Michael Schiffer, “Envisioning a Northeast Asian Peace and Security Mechanism,” http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/other/US-ROK_chpt_3.pdf.

⁷²- See Park, “Paradigms and Fallacies: Rethinking Northeast Asian Security and Its Im-

Beyond the involvement of the six parties involved in the Six-Party Talks, the participation of states outside of the geographical area of Northeast Asia but still within the wider Asia-Pacific region may help keep the momentum as far as the process of creating a security dialogue mechanism in Northeast Asia is concerned. Take the case of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which is the most criticized for simply being a forum for security dialogue, is actually indicative of the efforts by Asia-Pacific states to promote political and security dialogue in the region. All the parties to the Six-Party Talks are also part of the ARF. This includes North Korea whose joining the ARF in 2000 was seen as a sign of a change of position by Pyongyang in regard to international engagements, from one of self-imposed isolation to a gradual participation in international affairs.

Northeast Asian states can possibly learn from their Southeast Asian neighbors on how to keep the sub-region peaceful and become engaged in security dialogue despite the presence of bilateral disputes among ASEAN members. Despite the presence of disputes between its members, these issues have been buried through ASEAN. For ASEAN, it appears that a security community has actually been developed, particularly when one subscribes to the argument that a security community results when none of the parties involved is actually preparing to go to war against each other. A security community among the Southeast Asian states has resulted through ASEAN despite the mistrust that prevails among its members.

While there may be doubts as to the applicability of the ASEAN

plications for Korea.”

model as far as Northeast Asia is concerned, the path ASEAN has taken is worthy of consideration considering that the animosity among Northeast Asian states that may be stronger compared to what the Southeast Asian states have. ASEAN as a security community was accomplished despite the prevailing mistrust between various societal groups and little peaceful interaction between them.⁷³ In the meantime, ASEAN itself (despite the challenges that it faces in promoting Southeast Asian security) could serve as a facilitator of dialogues among Northeast Asian states. The case of the ASEAN Plus Three could be an example of where ASEAN in effect is the hub that brings together Northeast Asian states of Japan, South Korea, and China for economic cooperation.

The initial three members have increased the level of their cooperation by strengthening their trilateral ties in the three-nation summit held in Beijing in October 2009. Leaders from South Korea, China, and Japan were led, respectively, by South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, and Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama reviewed past accomplishments and discussed future joint efforts to combat financial crises, climate change, and pursue the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. As Premier Wen Jiabao stressed, “it [the summit] is essential for mutual political trust and promoting mutual cooperation for the development of Asia.”⁷⁴ The three states (through their officials) have agreed to work toward the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks “so as to safeguard peace and stability in Northeast Asia.”⁷⁵

⁷³- See Tuscisny, “Security Communities and Their Values: Taking Masses Seriously,” pp. 425-449.

⁷⁴- “China, Japan, South Korea deepen trilateral cooperation,” CCTV.com. Retrieved from <http://english.cctv.com/program/newshour/20091010/102701.shtml>.

⁷⁵- *Ibid.*

Conclusion

The way forward for Northeast Asians is to develop a sense of security community through a security dialogue mechanism in the sub-region. Given the complexity of the issues, the process may be cumbersome; yet is possible. While bilateral relations remain the foundation of inter-state relations among countries in Northeast Asia including the U.S., a multilateral security dialogue mechanism would be most useful. The revival of the Six-Party Talks would serve as the multilateral security dialogue and assist in developing a sense of security community in the Northeast Asian sub-region. It is noted that while the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is a pivotal point in the Northeast Asian security discourse, there are other longstanding issues that need to be simultaneously and immediately addressed.

Northeast Asia can learn from the Southeast Asian project of security community building, noting that creating such a community is still possible amid contending bilateral issues among community members. In the meantime, while the ASEAN experience cannot be replicated in Northeast Asia, ASEAN could help facilitate the process of security community building in Northeast Asia by serving as the hub for promoting a security dialogue in Northeast Asia.

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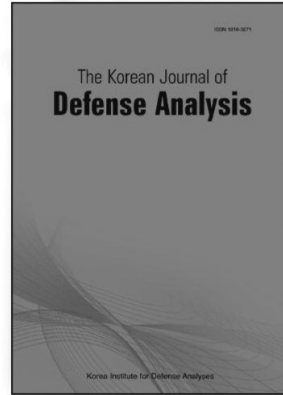
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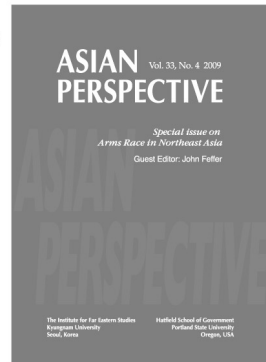
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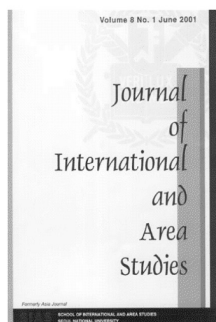
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